

SHORTER CLASSICS

TOM BROWN'S SCHOOLDAYS



TOM BROWN'S SCHOOLDAYS

BY
THOMAS HUGHES

EDITED BY
M. W. AND G. THOMAS

★

Illustrated by Ernest Shepard

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A TALE OF TWO CITIES
CHILDREN OF THE NEW FOREST
DAVID COPPERFIELD
GREAT EXPECTATIONS
GULLIVER'S TRAVELS
HUCKLEBERRY FINN
IVANHOE
JANE EYRE
LITTLE WOMEN
LORNA DOONE
MOBY DICK
OLIVER TWIST
THE ADVENTURES OF ROBINSON CRUSOE
THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER
THE WOMAN IN WHITE
TOM BROWN'S SCHOOLDAYS
TREASURE ISLAND
WESTWARD HO!

Other volumes in preparation

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PREFACE

THE works of the great prose writers, both British and American, are part of the heritage of all English-speaking people. Their appeal is universal, and each succeeding generation finds a fresh delight in them.

Many of the classics, of course, make little or no appeal to boys and girls; but there is a wide range of vivid, fast-moving stories that hold a perennial attraction for young people. Experience shows, however, that unedited versions of these books are rarely suited to the requirements of those who do not read easily and fluently. Some of them are so long that interest cannot be sustained. Most of them contain material that is beyond the comprehension of young readers.

The present series of *Shorter Classics* has been planned to meet the needs that thus become apparent.

Texts have been cut, but each book emerges as an integrated unity, without the device of 'connecting-links,' which can hardly fail to impart an air of unreality. Each is an undistorted miniature, and it can be read with ease before interest begins to slacken.

It is not enough that children should enjoy the narrative; they need to enjoy, and to appreciate, the individual style of the author. Complexities of language and construction often make this difficult, and for this reason the text has been slightly modified where some simplification seemed desirable. The atmosphere and 'feel' of the original, however, have been preserved throughout.

Each volume in the *Shorter Classics* series has been carefully selected as likely to hold the interest of those who do not find their chief pleasure in reading. The illustrations will, it is hoped, help to achieve this end.

The first, and still the most famous, of English school stories, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* paints a vivid picture of Rugby at the time when the great Thomas Arnold was Head-master, more than a century ago.

The author, Thomas Hughes, who was born in 1822, was himself a Rugby boy, and he knew how Doctor Arnold's reforms had improved conditions in the public schools. After leaving Rugby he went to Oxford. Then he became a barrister, and he was later a Member of Parliament, and a county court judge.

Thomas Hughes also wrote *Tom Brown at Oxford*. He died in 1896.

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The Brown family

THE Browns are a fighting family. Wherever hard knocks are going, there the Brown who is nearest must shove in his carcase. For centuries, in their quiet, dogged way, they have carried their lives in their hands; getting hard knocks and hard work in plenty, and little praise or pudding, which indeed they, and most of us, are better without.

They are broad in the shoulder, deep in the chest, and thin in the flank. They can't leave anything alone which they think going wrong. Failures slide off them like July rain off a duck's back feathers. Jem and his whole family turn out bad, and cheat them one week, and the next they are doing the same thing for Jack; and when he goes to the treadmill, and his wife and children to the workhouse, they will be on the look-out for Bill to take his place.

Let us fix our attention upon the small nest of Browns in which our hero was hatched, and

which dwelt in that portion of the Royal county of Berks which is called the Vale of the White Horse. Here lived Squire Brown, J.P. for the County of Berks, in a village near the foot of the White Horse range. And here he dealt out justice and mercy in a rough way, and begat sons and daughters and hunted the fox, and grumbled at the badness of the roads and the times.

Tom, the eldest child, was a hearty strong boy, given to fighting with and escaping from his nurse, and playing with all the village boys, with whom he made expeditions all round the neighbourhood. There was Job Rudkin, son of widow Rudkin, the most bustling woman in the parish. How she could ever have had such a stupid boy as Job for a child must always remain a mystery. The first time Tom went to their cottage with his mother, Job was not indoors, but he entered soon after, and stood with both hands in his pockets staring at Tom. Widow Rudkin began to make signs which only puzzled him, and at last, unable to contain herself longer, burst out with, 'Job! Job! where's thy cap?'

'What! bean't 'ee on ma head, Mother?' replied Job, slowly taking one hand from a pocket and feeling for the article in question;

which he found on his head sure enough, and left there, to his mother's horror and Tom's great delight.

Then there was poor Jacob Dodson the half-witted boy. Everything came to pieces in his hands, and nothing would stop in his head. They nicknamed him Jacob Doodle-calf.

But above all there was Harry Winburn, the quickest and best boy in the parish. He could wrestle and climb and run better than all the rest, and learned all that the schoolmaster could teach him. He was a boy to be proud of, with his curly brown hair, keen grey eye, straight active figure, and little ears and hands and feet.

There were very few days in the week in which Tom and the village boys were not playing by three o'clock. Prisoner's-base, rounders, high-cock-a-lorum, cricket, football, he soon learned them all; and though most of the boys were older than himself, he managed to hold his own very well. He was active and strong, and quick of eye and hand, so that in a short time he could run and jump and climb with any of them.

They generally finished their regular games half an hour or so before tea-time, and then began trials of skill and strength in many ways. Some of them would catch the Shetland pony

who was turned out in the field, and get two or three together on his back. The little rogue, enjoying the fun, would gallop off for fifty yards and then turn round, or stop short and shoot them on to the turf. Others played at peg-top or marbles, while a few of the bigger ones stood up for a bout at wrestling.

Tom at first only looked on, but he could not long keep out of it. Elbow and collar wrestling was the way to fame for the youth of the Vale; and all the boys knew the rules, and were more or less expert. But Job Rudkin and Harry Winburn were the stars. Day after day they stood foot to foot, and swayed and strained till a well-aimed crook of the heel or thrust of the loin took effect, and a fair back-fall ended the matter. And Tom watched with all his eyes, and one by one wrestled his way up to the leaders.

It was not long before he could manage to keep his legs against Job; but Harry Winburn was his master. From the first clutch of hands when they stood up, down to the last trip which sent him on to his back on the turf, he felt that Harry could do more than he. Tom worked on and on, and at last mastered all the dodges and falls except one. This one was Harry's own particular invention. He scarcely ever used it



except when hard pressed, but then out it came, and as sure as it did, over went poor Tom.

He thought about that fall at his meals, in his walks, when he lay awake in bed, in his dreams, but all to no purpose. Then Harry one day told him how it should be met, and in a week from that time the boys were equal. Tom was often thankful afterwards for that early drilling, and above all for having mastered Harry Winburn's fall.

When he was nine years old Tom went to a private school. Great was the grief amongst the village boys when he drove off with the Squire one August morning to meet the coach. Each of them had given him some little present, and his small box was full of peg-tops, white marbles (called 'alley-taws' in the Vale), screws, birds'

eggs, whip-cord, and jews'-harps. Poor Jacob Doodle-calf, in floods of tears, had pressed upon him his pet hedgehog, but this Tom had been obliged to refuse by the Squire's order. He had given them all a great tea under the big elm in their playground, for which Mrs. Brown had supplied the biggest cake ever seen in the village. Tom was really as sorry to leave them as they to lose him.

I have no room to speak of our private schools: what I have to say is about public schools. So we must hurry through Master Tom's year at a private school as fast as we can.

It was a fair average specimen, kept by a gentleman, with another gentleman as second master; but it was little enough of the real work they did—merely coming in to school when lessons were prepared and all ready to be heard. The whole discipline of the school out of lesson hours was in the hands of the two ushers, one of whom was always with the boys in their playground, at meals, in fact at all times and everywhere, till they were fairly in bed at night.

The half-holiday walks were the great events of the week. The whole fifty boys started after dinner with one of the ushers for Hazeldown, which was distant some mile or so from the school.

Hazeldown measured some three miles round, and in the neighbourhood were several woods full of all manner of birds and butterflies.

At the entrance of the down there was a steep hillock, which was the scene of terrific combats, at a game called by the queer name of 'mud-patties.' The boys divided into sides under different leaders, and one side occupied the mound. Then all parties provided themselves with many sods of turf, cut with their bread-and-cheese knives. The side which remained at the bottom advanced up on all sides under cover of a heavy fire of turfs; and as soon as they could clear the summit, they in turn became the besieged.

Others of the boys spread over the down, looking for the holes of humble-bees and mice. Others went after butterflies and birds' eggs; and Tom found for the first time the beautiful little blue butterfly with golden spots on his wings, and dug out his first sand-martin's nest. This resulted in a flogging, for the sand-martins built in a high bank close to the village, which was out of bounds. But one of the bolder spirits of the school easily persuaded Tom to break bounds and visit the martins' bank.

This ally of Tom's was indeed a desperate

hero in the sight of the boys, and feared as one who dealt in magic. They went to bed at eight, and of course lay awake for an hour or two telling ghost-stories. One night, when it came to his turn, Tom's friend suddenly declared that he would make a fiery hand appear on the door. To the astonishment and terror of the boys, a hand, or something like it, in pale light, did then and there appear.

The fame of this spread to the other rooms, and he declared that the same wonder would appear in all the rooms in turn, which accordingly it did. But one of the ushers, listening about at the doors, caught the performer in his night-shirt, with a box of phosphorus in his guilty hand. Lucifer-matches were then unknown; the very name of phosphorus had something diabolic in it to the boy-mind; so Tom's ally, at the cost of a sound flogging, earned the fear of most of his companions. He was a remarkable boy, and by no means a bad one. Tom stuck to him till he left, and got into many scrapes by doing so.

Tom learned a fair amount of Latin and Greek at the school, but somehow it didn't suit him, and in the holidays he was constantly working the Squire to send him at once to a

public school. Great was his joy then, when, in the middle of his third half-year in October 183—, a fever broke out in the village, and the boys were sent off to their homes.

The Squire was not quite so pleased as Master Tom to see that young gentleman's brown merry face appear at home, some two months before the proper time, for Christmas holidays. And so, after putting on his thinking-cap, he retired to his study and wrote several letters, the result of which was, that one morning at the breakfast-table, about a fortnight after Tom's return, he addressed his wife with—'My dear, I have arranged that Tom shall go to Rugby at once, for the last six weeks of this half-year, instead of wasting them, riding and loitering about home. It is very kind of Doctor Arnold to allow it. Will you see that his things are all ready by Friday, when I shall take him up to town, and send him down the next day by himself?'

Mrs. Brown doubted whether Tom were yet old enough to travel by himself, but she gave in like a wise woman, and proceeded to prepare Tom's kit for his launch into a public school.



The stage coach

‘Now, sir, time to get up, if you please. Tally-ho coach for Leicester’ll be round in half an hour, and don’t wait for nobody.’ So spake the boots of the Peacock Inn, Islington, at half-past two o’clock on the morning of a day in the early part of November 183—, giving Tom at the same time a shake by the shoulder, and then putting down a candle and carrying off his shoes to clean.

Tom and his father had arrived in town from Berkshire the day before, and as the Tally-ho was an early coach, they had driven out to the Peacock to be on the road. Tom had run out to see about him, had wondered at all the vehicles passing and repassing, and had made friends with the boots and ostler, from whom he learned that the Tally-ho was a tip-top goer, ten miles an hour including stops, and so punctual that all the road set their clocks by her.

He tumbled out of bed at the summons of Boots, and proceeded rapidly to wash and dress

himself. At ten minutes to three he was down in the coffee-room in his stockings, carrying his hat-box, coat, and comforter in his hand. There he found his father nursing a bright fire, and a cup of hot coffee and a hard biscuit on the table.

‘Now then, Tom, give us your things here, and drink this; there’s nothing like starting warm, old fellow.’

Tom drank the coffee, and prattled away while he worked himself into his shoes and his greatcoat, well warmed through. And just as he is swallowing his last mouthful, winding his comforter round his throat, and tucking the ends into the breast of his coat, the horn sounds, Boots looks in and says, ‘Tally-ho, sir,’ and they hear the ring and rattle of the four fast trotters and the town-made drag, as it dashes up to the Peacock.

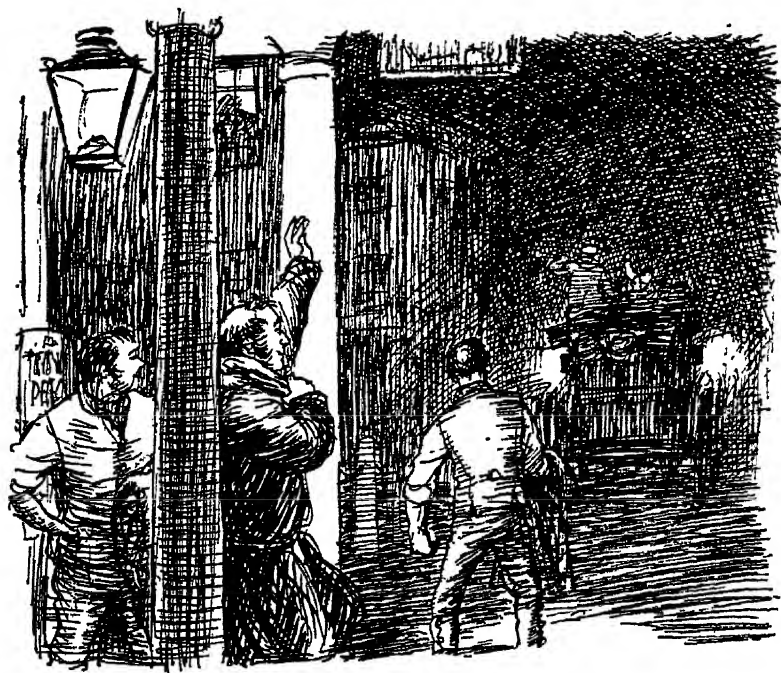
‘Anything for us, Bob?’ says the burly guard, dropping down from behind, and slapping himself across the chest.

‘Young genl’m’n, Rugby; three parcels, Leicester; hamper o’ game, Rugby,’ answers Ostler.

‘Tell young gent to look alive,’ says Guard, opening the hind-boot and shooting in the

parcels. 'Here, shove the portmanteau up a-top—I'll fasten him presently. Now then, sir, jump up behind.'

'Good-bye, Father—my love at home.' A last shake of the hand. Up goes Tom, the guard catching his hat-box and holding on with one hand, while with the other he claps the horn to his mouth. Toot, toot, toot! the ostlers let go their heads, the four bays plunge at the collar, and away goes the Tally-ho into the darkness, forty-five seconds from the time they pulled up.



Ostler, Boots, and the Squire stand looking after them under the Peacock lamp.

‘Sharp work,’ says the Squire, and goes in again to his bed, the coach being well out of sight and hearing.

Tom stands up on the coach and looks back at his father’s figure as long as he can see it, and then finishes his buttonings and other preparations for facing the three hours before dawn; no joke for those who minded cold, on a fast coach in November, in the reign of his late Majesty.

The Tally-ho is past St. Albans, and Tom is enjoying the ride though half-frozen. The guard, who is alone with him on the back of the coach, is silent, but has muffled Tom’s feet up in straw, and put the end of an oat-sack over his knees. He kicks his heels against the back-board, and would like to sing, only he doesn’t know how his friend the silent guard might take it.

And now the dawn breaks at the end of the fourth stage, and the coach pulls up at a little roadside inn with huge stables behind. There is a bright fire gleaming through the red curtains of the bar-window, and the door is open. The coachman catches his whip into a double thong

and throws it to the ostler; the steam of the horses rises straight up into the air. He has put them along over the last two miles, and is two minutes before his time; he rolls down from the box and into the inn. The guard rolls off behind. 'Now, sir,' says he to Tom, 'you just jump down, and I'll give you a drop of something to keep the cold out.'

Tom finds a difficulty in jumping, so the guard picks him off the coach-top and sets him on his legs. They stump off into the bar, and join the coachman and the other outside passengers.

A fresh-looking barmaid serves them each with a glass of spiced ale as they stand before the fire. It warms the cockles of Tom's heart and makes him cough. 'Rare tackle that, sir, of a cold morning,' says the coachman, smiling. 'Time's up!' They are out again and up; the coachee swinging himself up on to the box—the horses dashing off in a canter before he falls into his seat. Toot-toot-tootle-too goes the horn, and away they are again, five-and-thirty miles on their road (nearly half-way to Rugby, thinks Tom), and the prospect of breakfast at the end of the stage.

And now they begin to see, and the early life of the countryside comes out; a market cart or

two, men in smock-frocks going to their work pipe in mouth. The sun gets up and the mist shines like silver gauze. An early up-coach meets them, and the coachmen gather up their horses, and pass one another with the accustomed lift of the elbow, each team doing eleven miles an hour, with a mile to spare behind if necessary. And here comes breakfast.

'Twenty minutes here, gentlemen,' says the coachman, as they pull up at half-past seven at the inn-door.



Is not this a worthy reward for much endurance? There is the low dark room hung with sporting prints. The table covered with the whitest of cloths, and bearing a pigeon-pie, ham, round of cold boiled beef cut from a mammoth ox, and the great loaf of household bread on a wooden trencher. And here comes in the stout head waiter, puffing under a tray of hot viands; kidneys and a steak, rashers and poached eggs, buttered toast and muffins, coffee and tea, all smoking hot. And now fall on, gentlemen all. It is a well-known sporting house, and the breakfasts are famous.

Tom eats kidney and pigeon-pie, and drinks coffee, till his little skin is as tight as a drum; and then has the further pleasure of paying head waiter out of his own purse, and walks out before the inn-door to see the horses put to.

‘Now, sir, please,’ says the coachman. All the rest of the passengers are up, and the guard is locking the hind-boot.

‘Let ’em go, Dick!’ The ostlers fly back, drawing off the cloths from their glossy loins, and away we go through the market-place and down the High Street. We clear the town, and are well out between the hedgerows again as the town clock strikes eight. Tom asks the guard if he knows Rugby.

'Goes through it every day of my life.'

'What sort of a place is it?' says Tom.

'Werry out-o'-the-way place, sir; no paving to the streets, nor no lighting. Only three coaches a day, and one on 'em a two-oss wan, more like a hearse nor a coach. Regulator—comes from Oxford. Young genl'm'n at school calls him Pig and Whistle, and goes up to college by him (six miles an hour) when they goes to enter. Belong to school, sir?'

'Yes,' says Tom. 'I'm on my way there. I'm a new boy.'

'You're werry late, sir,' says the guard; 'only six weeks to the end of the half. We takes up fine loads this day six weeks, and Monday and Tuesday arter. Hopes we shall have the pleasure of carrying you back.'

Tom said he hoped they would; but he thought within himself that his fate would probably be the Pig and Whistle.

'Werry free with their cash is the young genl'm'n,' continued the guard. 'But, Lor' bless you, we gets into such rows all 'long the road, what wi' their pea-shooters, and long whips, and hollering, and upsetting every one as comes by; I'd a sight sooner carry one or two on 'em, sir, than a coach-load.'

‘What do they do with the pea-shooters?’ inquires Tom.

‘Do wi’ ’em! why, peppers every one’s faces as we comes near, and breaks windows wi’ them too, some on ’em shoots so hard. Now last June they was mendin’ the road, and there was a lot of Irish chaps, reg’lar roughs, a-breaking stones. As we came up, “Now, boys,” says the young gent on the box, “here’s fun! let the Pats have it about the ears.” “God’s sake, sir!” says Bob (that’s my mate the coachman), “don’t go for to shoot at ’em, they’ll knock us off the coach.” “Damme, Coachee,” says my young lord, “you ain’t afraid; hoora, boys! let ’em have it.” “Hoora!” sings out the others, and fill their mouths chock full of peas.

‘Bob, seeing as ’twas to come, hollers to his ’osses, and shakes ’em up, and away we goes twenty miles an hour. The Pats begin to hoora too, thinking it was a runaway, but you’d ha’ laughed to see how savage they looked when they gets the peas a-stinging all over ’em. They picks up stones, and gives it us right away till we gets out of shot, the young gents holding out werry manful with the pea-shooters. Young gent on box picks hisself up, and so does we all, and looks round to count damage. Bob’s head

cut open and his hat gone; 'nother young gent's hat gone; mine knocked in at the side, and not one on us as wasn't black and blue some weres or another, most on 'em all over.

'Two-pound-ten to pay for damage to paint, which they subscribed for there and then, and give Bob and me a extra half-sovereign each; but I wouldn't go down that line again not for twenty half-sovereigns.' And the guard shook his head slowly, and got up and blew a clear brisk toot-toot.

'What fun!' said Tom, who could scarcely contain his pride at this exploit of his future schoolfellows. He longed already for the end of the half so that he might join them.

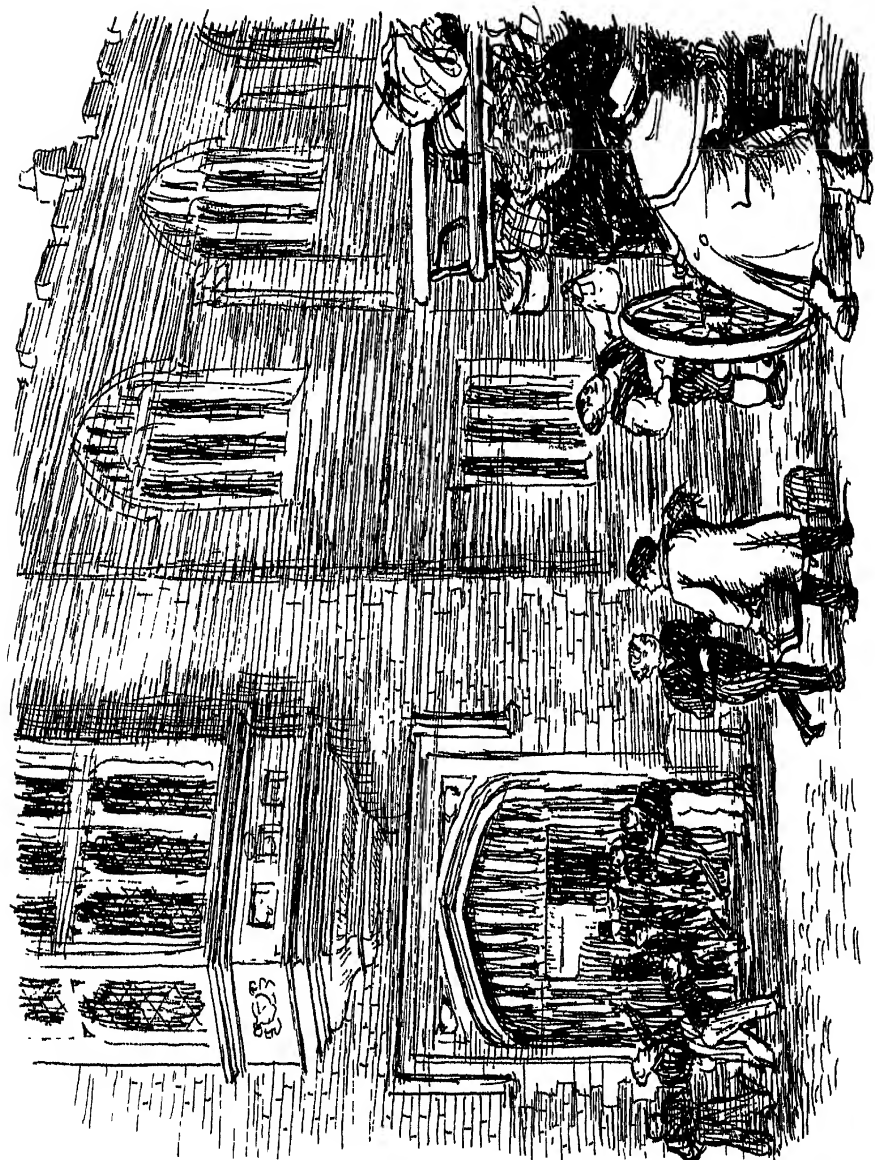
They turned a corner and neared the mile-stone, the third from Rugby. By the stone two boys stood, their jackets buttoned tight, waiting for the coach.

'Look here, sir,' says the guard, after giving a sharp toot-toot, 'there's two on 'em, out-and-out runners they be. They comes out about twice or three times a week, and sprints a mile alongside of us.'

And as they came up, sure enough, away went the two boys along the footpath, keeping up with the horses. At the second mile-stone they pulled up short, and waved their hats to

the guard, who had his watch out and shouted 4.56, thereby indicating that the mile had been done in four seconds under the five minutes. They passed several more parties of boys, all of them objects of the deepest interest to Tom, and came in sight of the town at ten minutes before twelve. Tom fetched a long breath, and thought he had never spent a pleasanter day. Before he went to bed he had quite settled that it must be the greatest day he should ever spend, and didn't alter his opinion for many a long year, if he has yet.





Rugby and football

‘AND so here’s Rugby, sir, at last, and you’ll be in plenty of time for dinner at the School-house,’ said the old guard, pulling his horn out of its case, and tootle-tooting away; while the coachman shook up his horses, and carried them past the School-gates and down the High Street.

Tom’s heart beat quick as he passed the great School field or close, with its noble elms, in which several games at football were going on. And he began already to be proud of being a Rugby boy, as he passed the School-gates and saw the boys standing there. One of the young heroes ran out from the rest, and after looking Tom over for a minute, began—

‘I say, you fellow, is your name Brown?’

‘Yes,’ said Tom.

‘Ah, I thought so. You know my old aunt, Miss East; she lives somewhere down your way. She wrote to me that you were coming to-day, and asked me to give you a lift.’

And East marched Tom off into the quadrangle, and began showing him the schools. Tom followed his guide through the School-house hall, which opens into the quadrangle. It is a great room thirty feet long and eighteen high, with two great tables running the whole length, and two large fireplaces at the side, with blazing fires in them. East shot through with his convoy, and landed him in the long dark passages, with a large fire at the end of each, upon which the studies opened. Into one of these East bolted, slamming and bolting the door behind them.

Tom hadn't been prepared for separate studies, and was not a little astonished and delighted with the place in question. It wasn't very large certainly, being about six feet long by four broad. The space under the window at the further end was occupied by a square table; a hard-seated sofa covered with red stuff occupied one side, running up to the end, and making a seat for one, or by sitting close for two; and a good stout wooden chair afforded a seat to another boy.

Over the door were a row of hat-pegs, and on each side bookcases with cupboards at the bottom; shelves and cupboards being filled with

school-books, a cup or two, a mouse-trap, and brass candlesticks, leather straps, and some curious-looking articles which puzzled Tom, until his friend explained that they were climbing-irons, and showed their use.

‘And shall I have a study like this too?’ said Tom.

‘Yes, of course, you’ll be chummed with some fellow on Monday, and you can sit here till then.’

‘What nice places!’

‘They’re well enough,’ answered East, ‘only uncommon cold at night sometimes. Gower, that’s my chum, and I make a fire with paper on the floor after supper generally, only that makes it so smoky.’

‘But there’s a big fire out in the passage,’ said Tom.

‘Precious little good we get of that tho’,’ said East; ‘Jones the praeposter has the study at the fire end, and he has rigged up an iron rod and green baize curtains across the passage, which he draws at night, and sits there with his door open, so he gets all the fire, and hears if we come out of our studies after eight, or make a noise.’

A quarter-past one now struck, and the bell began tolling for dinner, so they went into the Hall and took their places. Tom was at the very

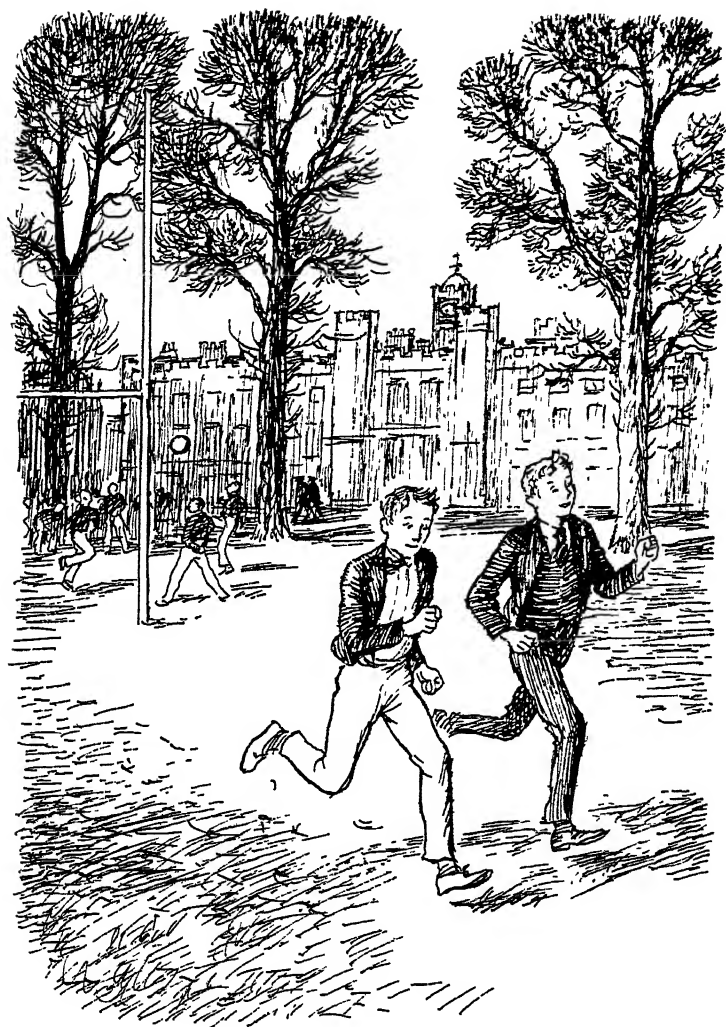
bottom of the second table next to the prae-poster, who sat at the end to keep order there. A great bearded man, whom Tom took for a master, began calling over the names, while the great joints were being rapidly carved on a third table in the corner.

Tom's turn came at last, and meanwhile he was all eyes, looking first with awe at the great man who sat close to him, and was helped first, and at the small boys round him. Some were reading, and the rest talking in whispers to one another, or stealing one another's bread, or shooting pellets. He made a capital dinner, and then the big man called 'Stand up' and said grace.

As soon as dinner was over, East proposed having a look at the close, and they went out through the quadrangle and past the big fives' court, into the great playground.

'That's the chapel you see,' said East, 'and there, just behind it, is the place for fights; you see it's 'most out of the way of the masters, who all live on the other side and don't come by here after first lesson or callings-over. That's when the fights come off.

'And all this part where we are is the Little-side ground, right up to the trees, and on the



other side of the trees is the Big-side ground, where the great matches are played. And there's the island in the furthest corner; you'll know that well enough next half, when there's island fagging. I say, it's horrid cold, let's have a run across,' and away went East, Tom close behind him. Right across the close they went, each doing all he knew, and there wasn't a yard between them when they pulled up.

'I say,' said East, as soon as he got his wind, looking with much increased respect at Tom, 'you ain't a bad scud, not by no means. Well, I'm as warm as toast now.'

'But why do you wear white trousers in November?' said Tom. He had been struck by this peculiarity in the costume of almost all the School-house boys.

'Why, bless us, don't you know?—No, I forgot. Why, to-day's the School-house match. Our house plays the whole of the School at football. And we all wear white trousers to show 'em we don't care for hacks. You're in luck to come to-day. You just will see a match; and Brooke's going to let me play in quarters.'

'Who's Brooke?'

'Why, that big fellow who called over at dinner, to be sure. He's cock of the School, and

head of the School-house side, and the best kick and charger in Rugby.'

'Oh, but do show me where they play. And tell me about it. Won't Brooke let me play?'

'Not he,' said East with some indignation; 'why, you don't know the rules, you'll be a month learning them. And it's no joke playing-up in a match, I can tell you. Why, there's been two collar-bones broken this half, and a dozen fellows lamed. And last year a fellow had his leg broken.'

Tom listened with respect to this chapter of accidents, and followed East across the level ground till they came to two poles eighteen feet high, fixed upright in the ground some fourteen feet apart, with a cross-bar running from one to the other at the height of ten feet or so.

'This is one of the goals,' said East, 'and you see the other, across there, under the Doctor's wall. It won't do just to kick the ball through these posts, it must go over the cross-bar. You'll have to stay in goal to touch the ball when it rolls behind the posts, because if the other side touch it they have a try at goal. Then we fellows in quarters, we play just about in front of goal here, and have to turn the ball and kick it back, before the big fellows on the other side

can follow it up. And in front of us all the big fellows play, and that's where the scrummages are mostly.'

Presently more boys came out. The crowd thickened as three o'clock approached; and when the hour struck, one hundred and fifty boys moved up towards the two goals. And now each side occupies its own ground, and we get a good look at them. You don't mean to say that those fifty or sixty boys in white trousers are going to play that huge mass opposite? Indeed I do, gentlemen; they're going to try at any rate, and won't make such a bad fight of it either, mark my word.

Old Brooke takes half a dozen quick steps, and away goes the ball spinning towards the School goal. Then the two sides close, and you can see nothing but a swaying crowd of boys. You hear the dull thud of the ball, and the shouts of 'Off your side!', 'Down with him!', 'Put him over!', 'Bravo!'. This is what we call a scrummage, gentlemen, and the first scrummage in a School-house match is no joke.

Yard by yard the School-house are driven back, contesting every inch of ground, and now the ball is behind their goal. We get a minute's breathing time before old Brooke kicks out.

Away goes the ball, and in another minute there is a shout of 'In touch,' 'Our ball.' Old Brooke stands with the ball in his hand, while the two sides form in deep lines opposite one another: he must strike it straight out between them. It falls opposite his brother. Hurra! that rush has taken it right through the School line, and young Brooke is close upon it. 'He is down!' No! a long stagger, but the danger is past. And now he is close to the School goal, the ball not three yards before him. No one throws himself on the ball, and young Brooke has touched it right under the School goal-posts.

Old Brooke of course will kick it out, but who shall catch and place it? Call Crab Jones. Here he comes, sauntering along with a straw in his mouth, the queerest, coolest fish in Rugby. The ball is kicked out and caught beautifully. Crab strikes his heel into the ground to make a small hole for the ball to lie on. 'Now!' Crab places the ball at the word, old Brooke kicks, and it rises slowly and truly as the School rush forward.

Then a moment's pause, while both sides look up at the spinning ball. There it flies straight between the two posts, some five feet above the cross-bar, an unquestioned goal. A



shout of joy rings out from the School-house players-up. A goal in the first hour—such a thing hasn't been done in the School-house match this five years.

'Over!' is the cry: the two sides change goals. 'Are you ready?' 'Yes!' And away comes the ball kicked high in the air, to give the School time to rush on and catch it as it falls. There is Crew, the artful dodger, driving the ball in behind our goal. Is there no one to meet him? Yes! look at little East. They rush together, and kick it at the same moment. East plunges on his shoulder, as if he would bury himself in the ground; but the ball rises straight in the air, and falls behind Crew's back, while the School-house cheer the pluckiest charge of all that hard-fought day.

And now the last minutes are come, and the School gather for their last rush. On they come, straight for our goal. All former charges have been child's play to this. The ball rolls slowly in behind the School-house goal, not three yards in front of a dozen of the biggest School players-up.

There stands the School-house praeposter, and Tom Brown by his side. Now is your time, Tom. The blood of all the Browns is up, and

the two rush in together, and throw themselves on the ball, under the very feet of the advancing column. Over them topple the leaders of the rush, falling flat on Tom, and knocking all the wind out of his small carcase. 'Our ball,' says the praeposter, rising with his prize; 'but get up there, there's a little fellow under you.' They roll off him, and Tom is discovered a motionless body. Old Brooke picks him up.

'Who is he?' says Brooke.

'Oh, it's Brown, he's a new boy,' says East, coming up.

'Well, he's a plucky youngster, and will make a player,' says Brooke.

And five o'clock strikes. The first day of the School-house match is over.



After the match

As the boys scattered away from the ground, East was beginning to consider what luxury they should go and buy for tea to celebrate that glorious victory. 'Come along down to Sally Harrowell's,' he said, hobbling along as fast as he could. 'That's our School-house tuck shop—she bakes such stunning murphies; we'll have a penn'orth each for tea.'

Tom's new purse and money burnt in his pocket; he wondered, as they toddled along the street, whether East would be insulted if he suggested further extravagance. At last he blurted out—

'I say, East, can't we get something else besides potatoes? I've got lots of money, you know.'

'Bless us, yes, I forgot,' said East, 'you've only just come. You see, all my tin's been gone this twelve weeks, and I haven't got a penny. Let's have a pound of sausages then, that's the best grub for tea I know of.'

'Very well,' said Tom, as pleased as possible, 'where do they sell them?'

'Oh, over here, just opposite'; and they crossed the street and walked into the cleanest little front-room of a small house, and bought a pound of most particular sausages; East talking pleasantly to Mrs. Porter while she put them in paper, and Tom doing the paying part.



From Porter's they went to Sally Harrowell's, where they found a lot of School-house boys waiting for the roast potatoes. East and Tom got served at last, and started back for the School-house just as the locking-up bell began to ring. The lower-school boys had tea in the lower-fifth school. Each had a quarter of a loaf

of bread and pat of butter, and as much tea as he pleased, and there was scarcely one who didn't add to this some further luxury, such as baked potatoes, a herring, sprats, or something of the sort; but few, at this period of the half-year, could live up to a pound of Porter's sausages.

East had produced a toasting-fork from his study, and set Tom to toast the sausages, while he mounted guard over their butter and potatoes; "Cause," as he explained, 'you're a new boy, and they'll play you some trick and get our butter, but you can toast just as well as I.' So Tom toasted his face and the sausages at the same time before the huge fire, and then the feast proceeded. The cups of tea were filled and emptied, and Tom imparted the sausages in small bits to many neighbours, and thought he had never tasted such good potatoes or seen such jolly boys.

After tea East conducted Tom up to his bedroom, that he might get on clean things and wash himself before singing.

'What's singing?' said Tom, taking his head out of his basin, where he had been plunging it in cold water.

'Well, you are jolly green,' answered his friend. 'Why, the last six Saturdays of every

half, we sing of course; and this is the first of them.'

'But who sings?'

'Why everybody, of course; you'll see soon enough.'

Supper came in due course at seven o'clock, consisting of bread and cheese and beer, which was all saved for the singing; and directly afterwards the fags went to work to prepare the Hall. Around the upper fire they placed the tables in the form of a horse-shoe, and upon them the jugs with the Saturday night's allowance of beer. Then the big boys began to drop in and take their seats, bringing with them bottled beer and song-books.

The sixth-form boys had not yet appeared, so to fill up the gap, an interesting and time-honoured ceremony was gone through. Each new boy was placed on the table in turn, and made to sing a solo, under the penalty of drinking a large mug of salt and water if he resisted or broke down. Tom performed the old west-country song of 'The Leather Bottel' with considerable applause. And at the half-hour down come the sixth-form boys, and take their places.

The glasses and mugs are filled, and then they strike up the old sea song—



A wet sheet and a flowing sea,
And a wind that follows fast, etc.,

which is always the first song in the School-house. And then follow 'The British Grenadiers,' 'Billy Taylor,' 'Three Jolly Postboys,' and other songs in rapid succession.

Then Warner, the head of the house, gets up and reminds them of the old custom of drinking the healths of those who are going to leave at the end of the half. 'He sees that they know what he is going to say already—(loud cheers)—and so won't keep them, but only ask them to treat the toast as it deserves. It is, the head of Big-side football, their leader on this glorious day—Pater Brooke!'

And away goes the pounding and cheering, becoming deafening when old Brooke gets on his legs: till, a table having broken down, and a gallon or so of beer been upset, the hero speaks, leaning his hands on the table, and bending a little forwards.

'Gentlemen of the School-house! I am very proud of the way in which you have received my name, and I wish I could say all I should like in return. But I know I shan't. However, I'll do the best I can to say what ought to be said by a fellow who's just going to leave, and

who has spent a good slice of his life here. Eight years it is, and eight such years as I can never hope to have again.

‘I’m going to talk seriously, because I feel so. It’s a jolly time too, getting to the end of the half, and a goal kicked by us first day—(tremendous applause)—after one of the hardest and fiercest day’s play I can remember—(frantic shoutings). I’m as proud of the house as any one. I believe it’s the best house in the School, out-and-out—(cheers). But it’s a long way from what I want to see it. First, there’s a deal of bullying going on. Bullies are cowards, and one coward makes many; so good-bye to the School-house match if bullying gets ahead here. Then there’s fuddling in the public-house, and drinking bad spirits, and such rot-gut stuff. You get plenty of good beer here, and that’s enough for you; and drinking isn’t fine or manly, whatever some of you may think of it.

‘One other thing I must have a word about. A lot of you say, “There’s this new Doctor hasn’t been here so long as some of us, and he’s changing all the old customs.” You all know that I’m not the fellow to back a master through thick and thin. If I saw him stopping football, or cricket, or bathing, or sparring, I’d be as ready

as any fellow to stand up about it. But he don't—he encourages them. Didn't you see him out to-day watching us?—(loud cheers for the Doctor)—and he's a strong true man, and a wise one too. And so let's stick to him, and talk no more rot.'

The boys cheered old Brooke, and then the Doctor. And then more songs came, until half-past nine struck, and the prayer-bell rang. The steps of the head-porter are heard on the stairs, and a light gleams at the door. In strides the Doctor, cap on head, book in one hand, and gathering up his gown in the other. He fascinates Tom as he stands there, and reads out the Psalm in that deep, ringing voice of his. Prayers are over, and Tom still stares open-mouthed after the Doctor's retiring figure, when he feels a pull at his sleeve, and turning round sees East.

'I say, were you ever tossed in a blanket?'

'No,' said Tom; 'why?'

'Cause there'll be tossing to-night most likely. So if you funk, you just come along and hide, or else they'll catch you and toss you.'

'Were you ever tossed? Does it hurt?' inquired Tom.

'Oh yes, bless you, a dozen times,' said East, as he hobbled along by Tom's side upstairs.

'It don't hurt unless you fall on the floor. But most fellows don't like it.'

Tom's heart beat rather quick as he and East reached their room, but he had made up his mind. 'I shan't hide, East,' said he.

'Very well, old fellow,' replied East, evidently pleased; 'no more shall I—they'll be here for us directly.'

The room was a great big one with a dozen beds in it, but not a boy that Tom could see, except East and himself. East pulled off his coat and waistcoat, and then sat on the bottom of his bed, whistling, and pulling off his boots. Tom followed his example.

A noise and steps are heard in the passage, the door opens, and in rush four or five great fifth-form boys, headed by Flashman, the School-house bully. Tom and East slept in the furthest corner of the room, and were not seen at first.

'Gone to ground, eh?' roared Flashman. 'Push 'em out then, boys! Look under the beds': and he pulled up the little white curtain of the one nearest him. 'Who-o-op,' he roared, pulling away at the leg of a small boy, who sung out lustily for mercy.

'Oh, please, Flashman, please, Walker, don't toss me! I'll fag for you, I'll do anything, only don't toss me.'



'You be hanged,' said Flashman. 'Come along, boys, here he is.'

'I say, Flashey,' sung out another of the big boys, 'drop that; you heard what old Pater Brooke said to-night. I'll be hanged if we'll toss any one against their will—no more bullying. Let him go, I say.'

Flashman, with an oath and a kick, released his prey, who rushed headlong under his bed again, for fear they should change their minds.

'There's plenty of youngsters don't care about it,' said Walker. 'Here's East—you'll be tossed, won't you, young un?'

'Yes,' said East, 'if you like, only mind my foot.'

'And here's another who didn't hide. Hullo! new boy, you don't mind being tossed?'

'No,' said Tom, setting his teeth.

'Come along then, boys,' sung out Walker, and away they all went, carrying along Tom and East, to Number 7, the largest room, and the scene of tossing, in the middle of which was a great open space. Here they joined other parties of the bigger boys, each with a captive or two. A dozen big boys seized hold of a blanket from one of the beds. 'In with East, quick, there's no time to lose.' East was chucked

into the blanket. 'Once, twice, thrice, and away!' Up he went like a shuttlecock, but not quite up to the ceiling.

'Now, boys, with a will,' cried Walker. This time he went clean up, and kept himself from touching the ceiling with his hand, and so again a third time, when he was turned out, and up went another boy. And then came Tom's turn. He lay quite still, and didn't dislike the 'once, twice, thrice'; but the 'away' wasn't so pleasant. They were in good wind now, and sent him slap up to the ceiling first time, against which his knees came rather sharply. But the moment's pause before descending was the rub, the feeling of utter helplessness, and of leaving his whole inside behind him sticking to the ceiling. He took his three tosses without a kick or a cry, and was called a young trump for his pains.

He and East stood now looking on. No accident happened, as all the captives were cool hands, and didn't struggle. But now there's a cry that the praeposter of the room is coming; so the tossing stops. All scatter to their different rooms, and Tom is left to turn in with the first day's experience of a public school to meditate upon.

Settling to the collar

AT half-past seven on the morning following the day of his arrival Master Tom lay in his bed, and watched the shoeblack as he marched round collecting the dirty shoes and boots, and depositing clean ones in their places. It was Sunday morning, and no one was in a hurry to get up. Soon, however, a noise of striving urchins arose—‘Go it, Tadpole!’ ‘Now, young Green,’ ‘Haul away his blankets,’ ‘Slipper him on the hands.’

Young Green and little Hall, commonly called Tadpole from his great black head and thin legs, were each hauling away at the other’s bed-clothes. ‘Hold that noise,’ called out the praeposter, sitting up and looking round his curtains; and then looking at his watch, he added, ‘Hullo, past eight! whose turn for hot water?’

(The fags had to descend in turn to the kitchen, and beg or steal hot water for the prae-

poster; and often two boys went down every morning to get a supply for the whole room.)

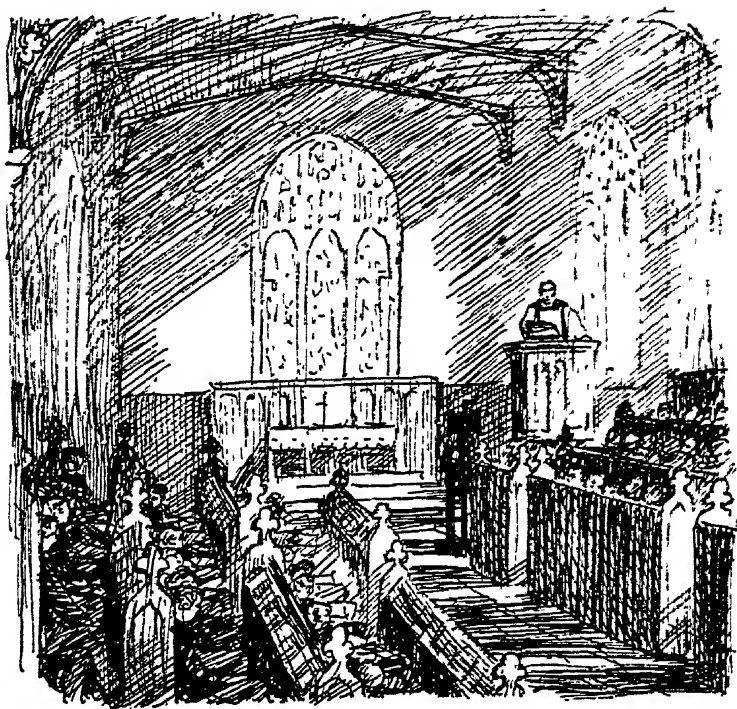
‘East’s and Tadpole’s,’ cried the senior fag.

‘I can’t go,’ said East, ‘I’m dead lame.’

‘Let me go for you,’ said Tom. ‘I should like it.’

And so Tom and the Tadpole in nightshirts and trousers started off downstairs, across the School-house court and into the kitchen; where they got their hot water, and returned with all speed and great caution. They narrowly escaped capture by some boys from the fifth-form rooms, who were on the look-out for the hot-water convoys, and pursued them up to the very door of their room, making them spill half their load in the passage. ‘Better than going down again though,’ as Tadpole remarked, ‘as we should have had to do if those beggars had caught us.’

By the time the calling-over bell rang, Tom and his new comrades were all down dressed in their best clothes. And then came breakfast, and a saunter about the close and town with East until the time for chapel. The bell began to ring at a quarter to eleven, and Tom got in early and took his place in the lowest row, and watched all the other boys come in and take their places.



And then came that great event in his, as in every other Rugby boy's life—the first sermon from the Doctor. More worthy pens than mine have described that scene. The oak pulpit standing out by itself above the School seats. The tall gallant form, the kindling eye, the voice, now soft as the low notes of a flute, now clear and stirring as the call of the bugle. The long lines of young faces rising tier above tier down the whole length of the chapel. It was a great and solemn sight.

The next day Tom was placed in the third form, and began his lessons in a corner of the big School. He found the work very easy, and soon gained golden opinions from his master. So all went well with him, and he wrote the most flourishing letters home, full of his own success and the delights of a public school.

In the house, too, all went well. As a new boy he was excused fagging for the first month, but this privilege did not please him, so East and his other young friends kindly allowed him to take their turns at fagging. These were the principal duties of the fags. From supper until nine o'clock three fags stood in the passages, and answered any praeposter who called Fag, racing to his door, the last comer having to do the work. This consisted of going for bread and cheese, cleaning candlesticks and putting in new candles, toasting cheese, and carrying messages about the house. Tom felt it a high privilege to receive orders from old Brooke, and he soon gained the character of a good-natured willing fellow, who was ready to do a turn for any one.

The only incident worth recording here was his first run at Hare-and-hounds. On the last Tuesday but one of the half-year, he was passing through the Hall after dinner, when he was hailed

with shouts from Tadpole and several other fags, the chorus of which was, 'Come and help us tear up scent.'

Tom found them tearing up old newspapers, copybooks, and magazines into small pieces, with which they were filling four large canvas bags.

'It's the turn of our house to find scent for Big-side Hare-and-hounds,' explained Tadpole; 'tear away, there's no time to lose before calling-over.'

'I think it's a great shame,' said another small boy, 'to have such a hard run for the last day.'

'Which run is it?' said Tadpole.

'Oh, the Barby run, I hear,' answered the other, 'nine miles at least; no chance of getting in at the finish, unless you're a first-rate scud.'

'Well, I'm going to have a try,' said Tadpole.

'I should like to try too,' said Tom.

After calling-over, Tom set off with East, whom he had persuaded to join. At the meet they found some forty or fifty boys. After a few minutes' waiting, two well-known runners, chosen for the hares, buckled on the four bags filled with scent, and started off at a long slinging trot across the fields in the direction of Barby. Then came a pause, and the pack is led through

the gateway into the field which the hares had first crossed. Here they break into a trot, scattering over the field to find the first traces of the scent which the hares throw out as they go along.

The scent lies thick right across another meadow and into a ploughed field, where the pace begins to tell; then down a large pasture studded with old thorns, which slopes down to the first brook. The brook is a small one, and the scent lies right ahead up the opposite slope, and as thick as ever. Tom, East, and the Tadpole find themselves up with the leading hounds; they have come a mile and a half in about eleven minutes.

Not a sign of the hares appears, so there is nothing for it but to cast about for scent. Tom and East follow young Brooke, who takes wide casts round to the left. The evening is closing in already, and they struggle after him, sobbing and plunging along, with Tadpole some thirty yards behind. Now comes a brook, with stiff clay banks, from which they can hardly drag their legs, and they hear faint cries from the wretched Tadpole, who has fairly stuck fast. Three fields more, and the two boys' souls die within them. They can never do it. Young

Brooke thinks so too, and says kindly, 'You'll cross a lane after next field. Keep down it, and you'll hit the Dunchurch road.' They struggle on across the next field, the cries of the hounds getting fainter and fainter, and then ceasing. The whole hunt is out of earshot, and all hope of coming in is over.

'Hang it all,' broke out East, mopping at his face, 'I told you how it would be. What a thick I was to come. Here we are, dead beat, and yet I know we're close to the run in, if we knew the way.'

'Well,' said Tom, mopping away, and gulping down his disappointment, 'it can't be helped. We did our best, anyhow. Hadn't we better find this lane, and go down it as young Brooke told us?'

'I suppose so—nothing else for it,' grunted East.

So they went on slowly and sorrowfully, found the lane, and went limping down it, plashing in the cold puddly ruts. The evening closed in fast, and clouded over, dark, cold, and dreary.

'I say, it must be locking-up time,' remarked East.

'What if we're late?' said Tom.

'No tea, and sent up to the Doctor,' answered East.

The thought didn't add to their cheerfulness. Presently a faint halloo was heard, and over a gate some twenty yards ahead crawled the wretched Tadpole. He had lost a shoe in the brook, and been groping after it in the stiff wet clay.

They plashed painfully down the lane until they came out on to a turn-pike road. Lumber-



ing along, with one lamp lighted, came a heavy coach, which they recognised as the famous Pig and Whistle. The boys caught it as it passed, and began scrambling up behind, in which exploit East missed his footing and fell flat on his nose along the road. The old scarecrow of a coachman pulled up, and agreed to take them in for a shilling; so there they sat on the back seat, and jogged into Rugby some forty minutes after locking-up.

Five minutes afterwards, three small limping shivering figures steal into the house, where the first thing they light upon in the passage is old Thomas, ambling along, candle in one hand and keys in the other. He stops with a grim smile. 'Ah! East, Hall, and Brown, late for locking-up. Must go up to the Doctor's study at once.'

'Who'll go in first?' inquires Tadpole.

'You—you're the senior,' answered East.

'Catch me—look at the state I'm in,' replied Hall, showing the arms of his jacket. 'I must get behind you two.'

'Well, but look at me,' said East. 'I'm worse than you. You could grow cabbages on my trousers. Here, Brown, you must lead. That's the library door.'



At the second knock the Doctor's voice said 'Come in,' and Tom, with the others behind him, sidled into the room.

'Well,' began the Doctor, drawing himself up, with his back to the fire, 'what makes you so late?'

'Please, sir, we've been out Big-side Hare-and-hounds, and lost our way.'

'Why what a state you're in, my boy,' said the Doctor, as the pitiful condition of East's garments was fully revealed to him.

'That's the fall I got, sir, in the road,' said East, looking down at himself; 'the Old Pig came by——'

'The what?'

said the Doctor.

'The Oxford coach, sir,' explained Hall.

'Hah! yes, the Regulator,' said the Doctor. 'Well now, run upstairs, all three of you, and get some clean things on, and then tell the housekeeper to give you some tea. Good night.'

'Good night, sir,' and away scuttled the three boys in high glee.

'What a brick, not to give us even twenty lines to learn,' said the Tadpole, as they reached their bedroom, and in half an hour afterwards they were sitting by the fire in the housekeeper's room at a sumptuous tea, 'twice as good a grub

as we should have got in Hall,' as the Tadpole remarked, his mouth full of buttered toast.

A day or two afterwards the great passage outside the bedrooms was cleared of the boxes and portmanteaus, and then came the making up of parties for the journey home. Tom joined a party who were to hire a coach, and post with four horses to Oxford. On the next Tuesday morning, at four o'clock, boys wrapped in great-coats and mufflers were swallowing hasty mouthfuls of hot coffee, rushing about, tumbling over luggage, and asking questions all at once. Outside the School-gates were drawn up several chaises and the four-horse coach which Tom's party had chartered, the post-boys in their best jackets and breeches, and a cornet-player, hired for the occasion, blowing away.

'Robinson's coach will be down the road in a minute,' says the leader. 'Now, boys, half a sovereign apiece if you beat 'em into Dunchurch by one hundred yards.'

'All right, sir,' shout the grinning post-boys.

Down comes Robinson's coach, and away go the two vehicles, horses galloping, boys cheering, horns playing loud; now half-way up a bank, now with a wheel-and-a-half over a yawning ditch. However, it's all over at last, and they

arrive at Oxford between eleven and twelve. Here the party breaks up, and Tom orders out a chaise and pair as grand as a lord.

And so the young gentleman arrives home, and Squire Brown looks rather blue at having to pay two-pounds-ten-shillings for the posting expenses from Oxford. But three happier people didn't sit down to dinner that day in England than the Squire, and his wife, and Tom Brown, at the end of his first half-year at Rugby.



The war of independence

THE lower-fourth form in which Tom found himself at the beginning of the next half-year was the largest form in the lower school, and numbered upwards of forty boys. They were as full of tricks as monkeys, and made fun of their master and their lessons. The temptations of this form soon proved too strong for Tom, and he rapidly fell away. The masters' hands were against him, and his against them.

Old Brooke left at Christmas, and the School-house began to see bad times. The big fifth-form boys, who were a sporting and drinking set, began to fag the little boys and to bully any who showed signs of resistance.

That great event in the English year, the Derby, was celebrated at Rugby by a lottery. On Saturday morning the Hall was full of boys, and at the head of one of the long tables stood the sporting set, with a hat before them, in which were the tickets folded up. One of them

began calling out the list of the house, and each boy as his name was called drew a ticket from the hat and opened it. As each small boy came up and drew his ticket, it was seized and opened by Flashman, or some other of the standers-by. But no great favourite is drawn until it comes to the Tadpole's turn. He shuffles up and draws, and tries to make off, but is caught, and his ticket is opened.

'Here you are! Wanderer! the third favourite,' shouts the opener.

'I say, just give me my ticket, please,' cries Tadpole.

'Hullo, don't be in a hurry,' breaks in Flashman; 'what'll you sell Wanderer for?'

'I don't want to sell,' replies Tadpole.

'Oh, don't you! Now listen, you young fool—you don't know anything about it; the horse is no use to you. Now I'll give you half a crown for him.' Tadpole holds out, but at length sells half for one shilling and sixpence, about a fifth of its fair value.

East presently comes up and draws a blank. Soon after comes Tom's turn. His ticket like the others is seized and opened. 'Here you are then,' shouts the opener, holding it up. 'Hark-away! By Jove, Flashey, your friend's in luck.'

'Give me the ticket,' says Flashman with an oath, his face black with rage.

'Wouldn't you like it?' replies the opener, not a bad fellow at heart, and no admirer of Flashman's. 'Here, Brown, catch hold,' and he hands the ticket to Tom, who pockets it.

The sporting set now gathered round him. 'Leave me to deal with him,' said Flashman, pushing in. 'Now, sir, you know me—you'll sell Harkaway for five shillings, or you'll repent it.'

'I won't sell a bit of him,' answered Tom shortly.

'You hear that now!' said Flashman, turning to the others. 'He's the coxiest young black-guard in the house—I always told you so.'

'You shall sell half at any rate,' cries one.

'I won't,' said Tom, flushing up to his hair.

'Very well then, let's roast him,' cried Flashman, and catches hold of Tom by the collar; one or two boys hesitate, but the rest join in. East seizes Tom's arm and tries to pull him away, but is knocked back by one of the boys, and Tom is dragged along struggling. His shoulders are pushed against the mantelpiece, and he is held by main force before the fire, Flashman drawing his trousers tight by way of



extra torture. Poor East, in more pain even than Tom, suddenly thinks of Diggs, a big fellow nearly at the top of the fifth, who wasn't on good terms with Flashman's set. He darts off to find him.

'Will you sell now for ten shillings?' says one boy.

Tom only answers by groans and struggles.

'I say, Flashey, he has had enough,' says the same boy, dropping the arm he holds.

'No, no, another turn'll do it,' answers Flashman. But poor Tom is done already, turns deadly pale, and his head falls forward on his breast, just as Diggs in frantic excitement rushes into the Hall with East at his heels.

'You cowardly brutes!' is all he can say, as he catches Tom from them, and supports him to the Hall table. 'Good God! he is dying. Here, get some cold water—run for the housekeeper.'

Flashman and one or two others slink away; the rest bend over Tom or run for water, while East darts off for the housekeeper. Water comes, and they throw it on his hands and face, and he begins to come to. 'Where am I?' says Tom, opening his eyes. 'Ah! I remember now,' and he shut his eyes again and groaned.



The housekeeper comes in with strong salts, and Tom soon recovers enough to sit up. There is a smell of burning; she examines his clothes, and looks up inquiringly. The boys are all silent.

‘How did he come so?’ No answer.

‘There’s been some bad work here,’ she adds, looking very serious, ‘and I shall speak to the Doctor about it.’

‘Hadn’t we better carry him to the sick-room?’ suggests Diggs.

‘Oh, I can walk now,’ says Tom, and, supported by East and the housekeeper, goes to the sick-room.

'Are you much hurt, dear old boy?' whispers East.

'Only the back of my legs,' answers Tom. They are indeed badly scorched, and part of his trousers burnt through. But soon he is in bed with cold bandages. After a sound night's rest, the old boy-spirit comes back again. East comes in reporting that the whole house is with him, and he forgets everything except their resolve never to be beaten by that bully Flashman.

When he came back into School after a couple of days in the sick-room, he found matters much changed for the better. Flashman's brutality had disgusted even his friends, and two or three of the boys who had helped to roast Tom came up and begged his pardon. He kept Harkaway all to himself, and won the second prize in the lottery, some thirty shillings, which he and East spent on pictures for their study, two new bats and a cricket-ball, all the best that could be got, and a supper of sausages, kidneys, and pies.

Flashman's wrath, however, burst out every now and then, and they felt that they hadn't quite done with him yet. It wasn't long before the last act of that drama came, and with it, the end of bullying for Tom and East at Rugby.

They now often stole out into the Hall at nights, partly for the excitement of doing something which was against rules. One evening, in forbidden hours, they were occupying the seats before the fire nearest the door, while Diggs sprawled before the further fire. Presently a step came down the passage, the door opened, and in walked Flashman. He didn't see Diggs, and as the boys didn't move for him, he struck one of them to make them get out of his way.

'What's that for?' growled the assaulted one.

'Because I choose. You've no business here—go to your study.'

'You can't send us.'

'Can't I? Then I'll thrash you if you stay,' said Flashman savagely.

'I say, you two,' said Diggs, from the end of the Hall, 'you'll never get rid of that fellow till you lick him. Go in at him, both of you—I'll see fair play.'

Flashman was taken aback, and retreated two steps. East looked at Tom. 'Shall we try?' said he. 'Yes,' said Tom desperately. So the two advanced on Flashman with clenched fists and beating hearts. He faced the boys, saying, 'You impudent young blackguards!'—Before he could finish his abuse they rushed in and began



pummelling him. He hit out wildly and savagely. Tom went spinning backwards over a form, and Flashman turned to East with a savage grin. But now Diggs jumped down from the table on which he had seated himself. 'Stop there,' shouted he, 'the round's over—half-minute time allowed.'

'What is it to you?' faltered Flashman, who began to lose heart.

'I'm going to see fair, I tell you,' said Diggs with a grin. '"Tain't fair for you to be fighting one of them at a time. Are you ready, Brown? Time's up.'

The small boys rushed in again. Flashman caught East by the throat and tried to force him back on the iron-bound table; but Tom, remembering the old throw he had learned from Harry Winburn, crooked his leg inside Flashman's, and threw his whole weight forward. The three tottered for a moment, and then over they went on to the floor, Flashman striking his head against a form in the fall.

The two youngsters sprang to their legs, but Flashman lay still. They began to be frightened. Tom stooped down, and then cried out, scared out of his wits, 'He's bleeding awfully; come here, East, Diggs—he's dying!'

'Not he,' said Diggs, 'it's all a sham. He's only afraid to fight it out.'

East was as frightened as Tom. Diggs lifted Flashman's head, and he groaned.

'What's the matter?' shouted Diggs.

'My skull's fractured,' sobbed Flashman.

'Fiddlesticks! it's nothing but the skin broken,' said Diggs, feeling his head. 'Cold water and a bit of rag's all he'll want.'

'Let me go,' said Flashman, surlily, sitting up; 'I don't want your help.' And he walked out of the Hall.

'He can't be very bad,' said Tom with a deep sigh, much relieved to see his enemy march so well.

'Not he,' said Diggs, 'and you'll see you won't be troubled with him any more.'

Flashman never laid a finger on either of them again, for he soon disappeared from the School world. One fine summer evening he got drunk, and the Doctor, who had long had his eye on him, expelled him next morning.

A chapter of accidents

AFTER young Brooke and Diggs got into the sixth, law and order were restored, but East and Tom, the Tadpole, and one or two more couldn't easily return into the paths of steadiness. While they had been little boys, the scrapes they got into hadn't much mattered, but now they were in the upper school, all wrong-doers from which were sent up straight to the Doctor at once: so they began to come under his notice.

You have been told of the first occasion on which they were sent up to the Doctor, and the remembrance of it was so pleasant that they had much less fear of him than most boys. The next time that Tom came before him, however, the interview was of a very different kind. It happened just about the time at which we have now arrived, and was the first of a series of scrapes into which our hero managed now to tumble.

The river Avon at Rugby is a slow stream,

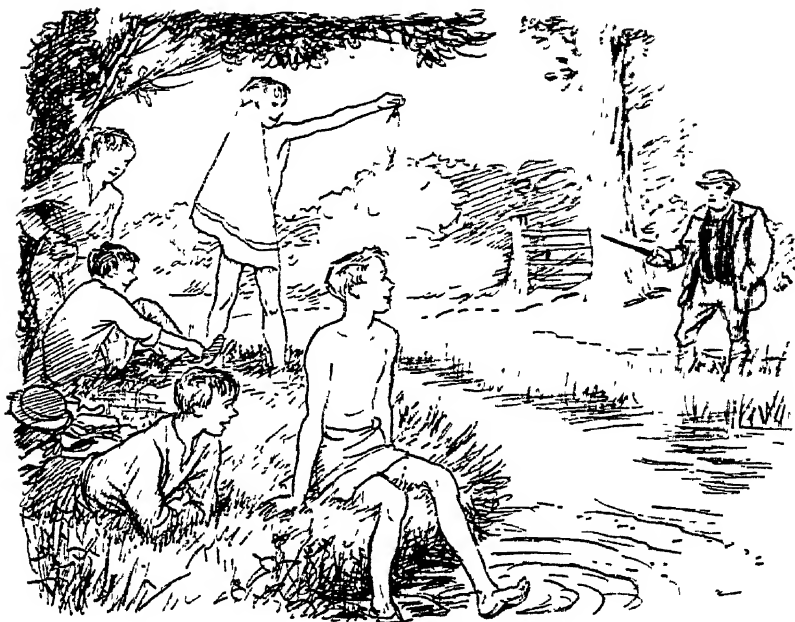
in which chub, dace, roach, and other coarse fish are plentiful enough. Now the boys fancied they had a right to fish over the whole river, and would not understand that the right only extended to the Rugby side. As ill-luck would have it, the gentleman who owned the opposite bank had ordered his keepers not to let the boys fish on his side.

The School-house boys spent a large portion of the day by the river side, and when tired of swimming they would get out on the other side and fish, or set night-lines till the keeper hove in sight, and then plunge in and swim back and mix with the other bathers. One day Tom and three or four others were bathing, and had been taking up and re-setting night-lines. They were standing about when they were aware of a man in a velveteen shooting-coat approaching from the other side. He was a new keeper, so they didn't recognise him till he pulled up right opposite, and began:

'I see'd some of you young gentlemen over this side a-fishing just now.'

'Hullo, who are you? What business is that of yours, old Velveteens?'

'I'm the new under-keeper and master's told me to keep a sharp look-out on all you young



chaps. And I tells 'ee I means business, and you'd better keep on your side, or we shall fall out.'

'Look here, old boy,' cried East, holding up a miserable fish, 'would you like to smell 'em, and see which bank they lived under?'

The keeper turned away with a grunt, but evidently bent on mischief. The boys thought no more of the matter.

But now came on the may-fly season, and every little fish in the Avon was on the alert for the flies. One fine Thursday afternoon, Tom,

having borrowed East's new rod, started by himself to the river. He fished for some time with small success; not a fish would rise at him. But as he prowled along the bank he was presently aware of mighty ones feeding in a pool on the opposite side under the shade of a huge willow-tree. Forgetting landlords, keepers, and everything else, he plunged across, and in three minutes was creeping along on all fours towards the clump of willows.

In half an hour Master Tom had deposited three thumping fish at the foot of the giant willow. As he was baiting for a fourth, he became aware of a man coming up the bank not one hundred yards off. Another look told him that it was the under-keeper. Nothing for it but the tree, so Tom laid his bones to it, shinning up as fast as he could, and dragging up his rod after him. He had just time to reach and crouch along a huge branch some ten feet up, when the keeper arrived at the clump.

The gleam on the scales of the dead fish caught his eye, and he made for the foot of the tree. Tom crouched lower along the branch. 'If I could only get the rod hidden,' thought he, and began gently shifting it to get it alongside him. Alas! the keeper catches the rustle, and

then a sight of the rod, and then of Tom's hand and arm.

'Oh, be up there, be 'ee?' says he, running under the trees. 'Now you come down this minute.'

'Thank 'ee, Velveteens, I'm very comfortable,' said Tom.

'Werry well, please yourself,' says the keeper, taking his seat on the bank. 'I bean't in no hurry, so you med' take yer time. I'll larn 'ee to give honest folk names afore I've done with 'ee.'

The keeper quietly proceeded to take out his pipe, fill, and light it, keeping an eye on Tom, who sat across the branch. The more he thought of it the less he liked it. 'It must be getting near second calling-over,' thinks he. Keeper smokes on stolidly. 'If he takes me up, I shall be flogged safe enough. I can't sit here all night. Wonder if he'll rise at silver.'

'I say, keeper,' said he meekly, 'let me go for two bob?'

'Not for twenty,' grunts his persecutor.

And so they sat on till long past second calling-over, and the sun came slanting in through the willow branches, telling of locking-up near at hand.



'I'm coming down, keeper,' said Tom at last with a sigh, fairly tired out. 'Now what are you going to do?'

'Walk 'ee up to School, and give 'ee over to the Doctor,' says Velveteens, knocking the ashes out of his fourth pipe, and standing up.

'Very good,' said Tom. 'I'll go with you quietly.'

And so Tom descended, and wended his way drearily by the side of the keeper.

How changed and stern the Doctor seemed from the last time that Tom was up there, as the keeper told the story, not omitting to state how Tom had called him names. 'Indeed, sir,' broke in the culprit, 'it was only Velveteens.' The Doctor only asked one question.

'You know the rule about the banks, Brown?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Then wait for me to-morrow, after first lesson.'

'I thought so,' muttered Tom.

'And about the rod, sir?' went on the keeper; 'Master's told we as we might have all the rods——'

'Oh, please, sir,' broke in Tom, 'the rod isn't mine.' The Doctor looked puzzled, but the keeper, who was a good-hearted fellow, gave up his claim. Tom was flogged next morning, and a few days afterwards met Velveteens, and presented him with half a crown for giving up the rod claim, and they became sworn friends; and I regret to say that Tom had many more fish from under the willow that season, and was never caught again by Velveteens.

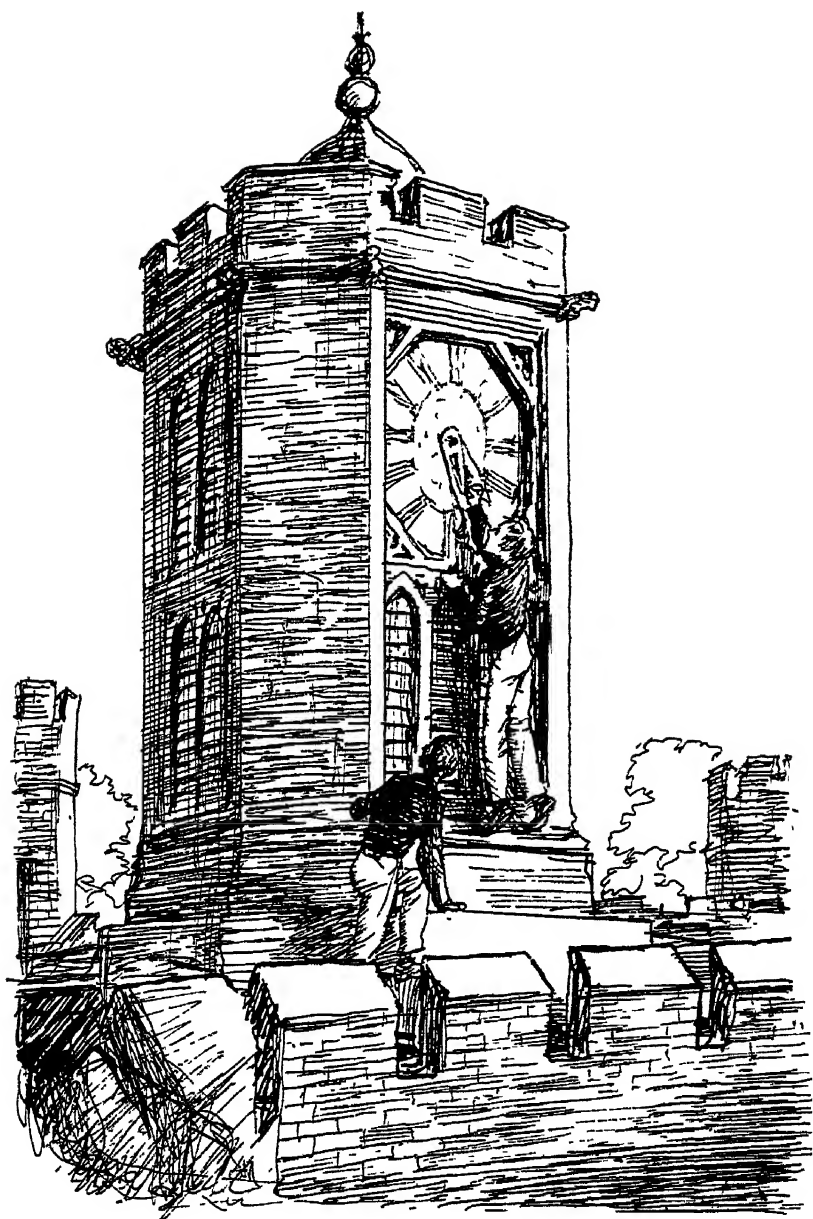
It wasn't three weeks before Tom, and now East by his side, were again in the awful presence. This time, however, the Doctor was not so

terrible. A few days before, they saw five or six new fives-balls hit on to the top of the School. 'I say, Tom,' said East, 'couldn't we get those balls somehow?'

'Let's try.'

So they borrowed a coal hammer, bought some big nails, and after one or two attempts, scaled the Schools, and possessed themselves of huge quantities of fives-balls. The place pleased them so much that they spent all their spare time there, scratching and cutting their names on the top of every tower. At last they finished up with inscribing H. EAST, T. BROWN on the minute-hand of the great clock. In doing this they held the minute-hand, and disturbed the clock's working.

So next morning, when masters and boys came trooping down to prayers, the injured minute-hand was showing three minutes to the hour. They all pulled up and took their time. When the hour struck, doors were closed, and half the School was late. Thomas being set to make inquiry, discovers their names on the minute-hand, and reports accordingly; and they are sent for. But the Doctor, after hearing their story, doesn't make much of it, and only gives them thirty lines to learn by heart.

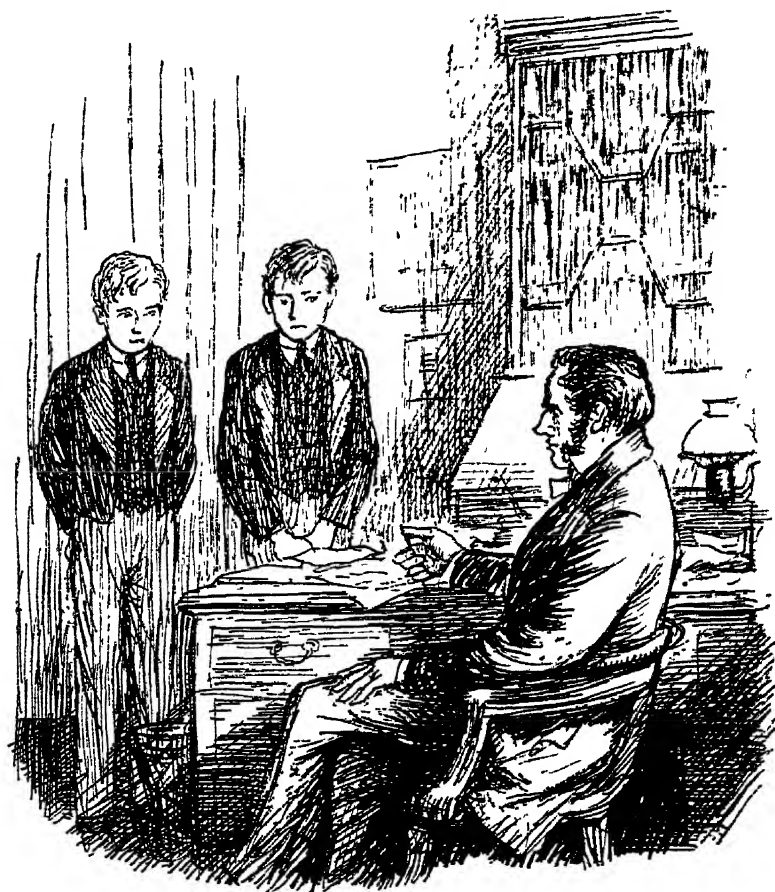


Alas, almost the next day was one of the great fairs in the town. As several rows had taken place on these occasions, the Doctor gives out, after prayers in the morning, that no boy is to go down into the town. Wherefore East and Tom, for no earthly pleasure except that of doing what they are told not to do, start away after second lesson. They go down a back lane which leads into the town, and run plump upon one of the masters as they come into the High Street. He sends them up to the Doctor; who, on learning that they had been at prayers in the morning, flogs them soundly.

It was just the end of the half, and on the next evening but one Thomas knocks at their door, and says the Doctor wants to see them. They look at one another in silent dismay. What can it be now? They go up to the study and find the Doctor, not angry, but very grave. He has sent for them to speak very seriously before they go home. They have each been flogged several times in the half-year for breaking rules. This cannot go on. They are doing no good to themselves or others. Rules are made for the good of the whole School, and must and shall be obeyed. Those who break them will not be allowed to stay at the School. He should be

sorry if they had to leave, and wishes them to think very seriously in the holidays over what he has said. Good-night.

And so the two hurry off horribly scared: the idea of having to leave has never crossed their minds, and is quite unbearable.



The new boy

THE turning-point in our hero's school career had now come, and the manner of it was as follows. On the evening of the first day of the next half-year, Tom, East, and another School-house boy rushed into the matron's room in high spirits.

'Well, Mary,' shouted one, 'here we are again, you see, as jolly as ever. Let us help you to put the things away.'

'Am I and East to have Gray's study? You know you promised to get it for us if you could,' shouted Tom.

'Bless the boys !' cries Mary. 'Now go up to the housekeeper's room and get your suppers; you know I haven't time to talk. Master East, do let those things alone—you're mixing up three new boys' things.' And she rushed at East, who escaped round the open trunks.

As the boys turned to leave the room, she touched Tom's arm and said, 'Master Brown,

please stop a minute. I want to speak to you.'

'Very well, Mary. I'll come in a minute.'

'Oh, Master Brown,' went on the matron when the rest had gone, 'you're to have Gray's study, Mrs. Arnold says. And she wants you to take in this young gentleman. He's a new boy, and thirteen years old, tho' he don't look it. He's very delicate, and has never been away from home before. And I told Mrs. Arnold I thought you'd be kind to him, and see that they don't bully him.'

Tom looked across the room, and in the far corner of the sofa saw a slight pale boy, with large blue eyes and light fair hair, who seemed ready to shrink through the floor. 'Well,' he sighed, 'I suppose I must give up East. Come along, young 'un. What's your name? I'll show you our study.'

'His name's George Arthur,' said the matron, walking up to him with Tom. 'I've had his things put into the study, which his mother has had new papered, and the sofa covered, and new curtains over the door.'

With the new boy at his heels Tom marched off along the passage, at the further end of which was a crowd of boys in loud talk and laughter. There was a sudden pause, and then a great



shout of greeting as Tom was recognised.

‘I say, young fellow,’ cried Hall, catching Arthur by the collar, ‘what’s your name? Where do you come from? How old are you?’

Tom saw Arthur shrink back and look scared as all the group turned to him, but thought it best to let him answer.

‘Arthur, sir. I come from Devonshire.’

‘Don’t call me “sir,” you young muff. Can you sing?’

The poor boy was trembling and hesitating. Tom struck in—‘You be hanged, Tadpole. He’s my chum in Gray’s old study, and I haven’t had a look at it yet. Come along, Arthur.’ And away went the two, Tom longing to get his charge safe under cover.

From morning till night he looked after him,

and even if he left Arthur in their study or in the close for an hour, was never at ease till he had him in sight again. He waited for him after every lesson, and watched that no tricks were played him. In short, as East remarked, he cackled after him like a hen with one chick.

About six weeks after the beginning of the half, as Tom and Arthur were sitting one night before supper, Arthur suddenly looked up and said, 'Tom, do you know anything of Martin?'

'Yes,' said Tom, 'I know him pretty well. He's a very good fellow, but as mad as a hatter. He's called the Madman, you know. And never was such a fellow for getting all sorts of rum things about him. He tamed two snakes last half, and used to carry them about in his pocket. I'll be bound he's got some hedgehogs and rats in his cupboard now, and no one knows what besides.'

'I should like very much to know him,' said Arthur. 'He was next to me in the form to-day, and he seemed so kind that I liked him very much.'

'Well, he's great fun, I can tell you,' said Tom, throwing himself back on the sofa and chuckling. 'We had such a game with him last half. He had been kicking up horrid stinks in

his study, till I suppose some fellow told Mary, and she told the Doctor. Anyhow, one day the Doctor came striding into the Hall. "East," says he, "just come and show me Martin's study." "Oh, here's a game," whispered the rest of us, and we all cut upstairs after the Doctor, East leading.

'The door of the old Madman's den opened, and there he was, looking precious scared, and a stink fit to knock you down coming out. 'Twas all the Doctor could do to stand his ground, and East and I, who were looking in under his arms, held our noses tight. An old magpie was standing on the window-sill, all his feathers drooping, and looking disgusted and half-poisoned.

"What can you be about, Martin?" says the Doctor; "you really mustn't go on in this way—you're a nuisance to the whole passage."

"Please, sir, I was only mixing up this powder," and the Madman went off pounding: click, click, click; he hadn't given six clicks before, puff! up went the whole into a great blaze, and back we tumbled into the passage. The magpie fluttered down, swearing, and the Madman danced out, howling, with his fingers in his mouth. The Doctor caught hold of him, and called us to fetch some water. "There, you silly fellow," said he, "you see, you don't know the



least what you are doing. Come down to the housekeeper's room, and let us see if you are hurt."

'And away went the two, and we stayed till Martin came back with his hand bandaged and turned us out. However, I'll go and see what he's after, and tell him to come in after prayers to supper.' And away went Tom to find the boy in question.

Martin had a passion for birds, beasts, and insects, and knew more of them and their habits than any one in Rugby; except perhaps the Doctor, who knew everything. His door was barricaded by a set of bolts, and behind it the owner carried on his various hobbies.

‘Open, Martin, old boy—it’s only I, Tom Brown.’

‘Oh, very well, stop a moment.’ One bolt went back. Tom gave a kick, the other bolt creaked, and he entered the den.

Den indeed it was, about five feet six inches long by five wide, and seven feet high. There was no carpet or curtain. A jackdaw cage occupied one wall, and the other was adorned by a small hatchet, a pair of climbing-irons, and his tin candle-box in which he was trying to raise a young family of field-mice.

‘Well, old boy,’ said Tom, ‘you haven’t got any sweeter in the den this half. Never mind, I ain’t going to stop, but you come up after prayers to our study. We’ll have a good supper and talk about bird’s-nesting.’

Martin was highly pleased at the invitation, and promised to be up without fail.

As soon as prayers were over, Tom and Arthur, having secured their allowances of bread and

cheese, scrambled away to prepare for Martin a sumptuous banquet. Tom dived into his cupboard, and hauled out an old knuckle-bone of ham, while Arthur produced a bottle of pickles and a pot of jam. In a minute or two Martin knocked and was admitted, bearing his bread and cheese, and the three fell to with hearty good will, talking faster than they ate.

'Here's Arthur,' said Tom, 'a regular young town-mouse, longing to break his neck climbing trees.'

'Well, I say,' sputtered out Martin eagerly, 'will you come to-morrow, both of you, to Caldecott's Spinney then, for I know of a kestrel's nest, up a fir-tree—I can't get at it without help.'

'Oh, yes, do let us go,' said Arthur; 'I never saw a hawk's nest.'

Just then a knock came to the door, and East's voice was heard craving admittance.

'I say, Scud,' said Tom, 'we're all going after a hawk's nest to-morrow, in Caldecott's Spinney, and if you'll come and behave yourself we'll have a stunning climb.'

'Hooray! I'm your man. I'm for the hawk's nest and anything that turns up.'

The bird-fanciers

THE next day, after dinner, the Madman is busy with the preparations for their expedition, fitting new straps on to his climbing-irons, filling large pill-boxes with cotton-wool, and sharpening East's small axe. They carry all their things into calling-over, and directly afterwards the four set off at a smart trot down the Lawford foot-path straight for Caldecott's Spinney and the hawk's nest. Martin strides away in front with his climbing-irons strapped under one arm, his pecking-bag under the other, and his pockets and hat full of pill-boxes and cotton-wool.

When they had crossed three or four fields without a check, Arthur began to lag, and Tom seeing this shouted to Martin to pull up a bit. 'We ain't out Hare-and-hounds—what's the good of grinding on at this rate?'

'There's the spinney,' said Martin, pulling up on the brow of a slope. 'The nest is in one of those high fir-trees at this end.'

‘Oh, come on, don’t let us stop,’ said Arthur, who was getting excited at the sight of the wood; so they broke into a trot again, and were soon in the spinney. Here they advanced as noiselessly as possible, lest keepers or other enemies should be about, and stopped at the foot of a tall fir.

It was a very difficult tree to climb until the branches were reached. The first was some fourteen feet up; and the trunk was too large at the bottom to be swarmed, in fact the boys could not reach more than half round it with their arms. Martin and Tom, both of whom had irons on, tried it without success at first; the fir bark broke away when they stuck the irons in, and down they came slithering to the ground.

‘We must try a pyramid,’ said Tom at last. ‘Now, Scud, you lazy rascal, stick yourself against the tree.’

‘I dare say! and have you standing on my shoulders with the irons on. What do you think my skin’s made of?’ However, up he got and leant against the tree, putting his head down, and clasping it with his arms. ‘Now then, Madman,’ said Tom, ‘you next.’

‘No, I’m lighter than you. You go next.’



So Tom got on East's shoulders and grasped the tree above. Then Martin scrambled up on to Tom's shoulders, and with a spring clasped the stem some ten feet up. For a moment or two they thought he couldn't get up, but then, holding on with arms and teeth, he worked first one iron then the other firmly into the bark, and in another minute had hold of the lowest branch.

Up he went, hand over hand, until he was amongst the small branches close to the nest. Away dashed the old bird, and soared up above the trees, watching the intruder.

'All right—four eggs!' shouted Martin.

'Take 'em all!' shouted East; 'that'll be one apiece.'

'No, no! leave one, and then she won't care,' said Tom.

The boys had an idea that birds couldn't count and were quite content so long as you left one egg. I hope it is so.

Martin carefully put one egg into each of his boxes and the third into his mouth, the only other place of safety, and came down like a lamp-lighter. All went well till he was within ten feet of the ground, when, as the trunk enlarged, his hold got less and less firm, and at last down he came with a run, tumbling on to his

back on the turf, spluttering and spitting out the remains of the great egg, which had broken by the jar of his fall.

‘Ugh, ugh! something to drink—ugh! it was addled,’ spluttered he, while the wood rang again with the merry laughter of East and Tom.

Then they examined the prizes, gathered up their things, and went off to a brook, where Martin swallowed huge draughts of water to get rid of the taste. From thence they struck across the country in high glee, beating the hedges and brakes as they went along. Arthur, to his intense delight, was allowed to climb a small oak for a magpie’s nest; and though he was in a great fright, he didn’t show it, and was praised by all for his skill. They crossed a road soon afterwards, and there close to them lay a heap of charming pebbles.

‘Look here,’ shouted East, ‘here’s luck! I’ve been longing for some good honest pecking this half-hour. Let’s fill the bags, and have no more of this fozzling bird’s-nesting.’

No one objected, so each boy filled the bag he carried full of stones: they crossed into the next field, Tom and East taking one side of the hedge and the other two the other side. It was great fun, rushing along the hedgerows, and

throwing stone after stone at blackbirds and chaffinches, though none of the birds was hit. Arthur soon entered into it, and shouted and threw and tumbled into ditches and through hedges as wildly as the Madman himself.

Presently the party, in full cry after an old blackbird (who was evidently used to the thing and enjoyed the fun, for he would wait till they came close to him, and then fly on with an impudent flicker of his tail), came beating down a high double hedge, two on each side.

‘There he is again!’, ‘Head him!’, ‘Let drive!’, ‘I had him there!’, ‘Take care where you’re throwing, Madman!’—the shouts might have been heard a quarter of a mile off. They were heard some two hundred yards off by a farmer and two of his shepherds, who were doctoring a sheep in the next field.

Now the farmer in question rented a house and yard at the end of the field in which the young bird-fanciers had arrived. Here he kept a large stock of cocks, hens and other poultry, and I regret to have to confess that after visits from the Rugby boys ancient and respectable fowls frequently disappeared. So he and his shepherds crouched behind the hurdles and watched the approaching party.

Why should that old guinea-fowl be lying out in the hedge just at this particular moment of all the year? Who can say? At any rate, just under East's nose popped out the old guinea-hen, scuttling along and shrieking, 'Come back, come back,' at the top of her voice. East lets drive a stone at her, and then rushes to turn her into the hedge again. He succeeds, and then they are all at it for dear life, up and down the hedge in full cry, the 'Come back, come back,' getting shriller and fainter every minute.



Meantime the farmer and his men steal over the hurdles and creep down the hedge towards the scene of action. They are almost within a

stone's throw of Martin, when Tom catches sight of them and sings out, 'Madman, look ahead!' Then, catching hold of Arthur, he hurries him away across the field towards Rugby as hard as they can tear. Had he been by himself he would have stayed to see it out with the others, but now his heart sinks, and all his pluck goes. The idea of being led up to the Doctor with Arthur for bagging fowls takes half the run out of him.

However, no boys are more able to take care of themselves than East and Martin. They dodge the pursuers, slip through a gap, and come pelting after Tom and Arthur, whom they catch up in no time. The farmer and his men are making good running about a field behind. They are all in for it together now, and must see it out. The next hedge is a stiff one. The pursuers gain horribly on them, and they only just pull Arthur through with two great rents in his trousers as the foremost shepherd comes up on the other side.

As they start into the next field they are aware of two figures walking down the footpath in the middle of it, and recognise Holmes (a sturdy, cheery praeposter of another house) and Diggs, who are taking a walk. 'Let's go to them

and surrender,' pants Tom.—Agreed.—And in another minute the four boys rush up as the farmer and his men bear down on them.

The farmer makes a rush at East and collars him. 'Hullo there, not so fast,' says Holmes. 'Now what's all this about?' 'I've got the young varmint at last,' pants the farmer; 'why they've been a-skulking about my yard and stealing my fowls, that's where 'tis; and if I don't have they flogged for it, every one on 'em, my name ain't Thompson.'

'I haven't been near his old barn this half,' cries East. 'Nor I,' 'Nor I,' chime in Tom and Martin.

'Now, Willum, didn't you see 'em there last week?'

'Yes, I seen 'em sure enough,' says Willum, grasping a prong he carried, and preparing for action.

The boys deny stoutly, and Willum is driven to admit that, 'if it worn't they 'twas chaps as like 'em as two peas.'

Holmes has had time to think. 'Now, sir,' says he to Willum, 'you see you can't remember what you have seen. I believe the boys.'

'I don't care,' blusters the farmer; 'they was arter my fowls to-day, that's enough for I. They

huv druv a dozen young pullets pretty nigh to death.'

'Oh, there's a whacker!' cried East. 'We haven't been within a hundred yards of his barn, and we've seen nothing but a tough old guinea-hen, who ran like a greyhound.'

'Indeed that's all true, Holmes, upon my honour,' added Tom. 'We weren't after his fowls. The guinea-hen ran out of the hedge under our feet, and we've seen nothing else.'

'Drat their talk. Thee catch hold o' t'other, Willum, and come along wi' 'un.'

'Farmer Thompson,' said Holmes, 'now listen to reason. The boys haven't been after your fowls, that's plain.'

'Tells 'ee I seed 'em. Who be you, I should like to know?'

'Never you mind, Farmer,' answered Holmes. 'And now I'll just tell you what it is—you ought to be ashamed of yourself for leaving all that poultry about with no one to watch it so near the School. You deserve to have it all stolen. So if you choose to come up to the Doctor with them, I shall go with you and tell him what I think of it.'

The farmer began to take Holmes for a master; besides, he wanted to get back to his



flock. So he began to hint at paying for the damage. Arthur jumped at this, offering to pay anything, and the farmer immediately valued the guinea-hen at half a sovereign.

‘Half a sovereign!’ cried East, now released from the farmer’s grip; ‘well, that is a good one! The old hen ain’t hurt a bit. She’s seven years old I know, and as tough as whip-cord. She couldn’t lay another egg to save her life.’

It was at last settled that they should pay

the farmer two shillings and his man one shilling, and so the matter ended, to the great relief of Tom. And now the whole party of boys marched off down the footpath towards Rugby. 'Now, you youngsters,' said Holmes, 'mind this, you're very well out of this scrape. Don't you go near Thompson's barn again, do you hear?'

Profuse promises from all, especially East.

'Mind, I don't ask questions,' went on Holmes, 'but I rather think some of you have been there before this after his chickens. Now, knocking over other people's chickens, and running off with them, is stealing. It's a nasty word, but that's the plain English of it. If the chickens were dead and lying in a shop you wouldn't take them, and there's no real difference between chickens running about and the same articles in a shop.'

The sermon sank into them all more or less, and very penitent they were for several hours.

Martin became a constant visitor to the study, and Arthur took to him kindly. Before the end of the half-year he had trained into a bold climber and a good runner, and knew twice as much about trees, birds, and flowers, and many other things, as our good-hearted young friend Harry East.

The fight

It was drawing towards the close of Arthur's first half-year, and the May evenings were lengthening out. It is a whole schoolday, and four or five of the School-house boys (amongst whom are Arthur, Tom, and East) are preparing third lesson together. They have finished the regulation forty lines, and are getting very tired. And now several long words come together, and the boy with the dictionary strikes work.

'I'm not going to look out any more words,' says he; 'we've done the quantity. Ten to one we shan't get so far. Let's go out into the close.'

'Come along, boys,' cries East, always ready to leave the grind, as he called it; 'our own master is laid up, you know, and we shall have one of the new masters, who's sure to go slow and let us down easy.'

As East had said, the regular master of the form was unwell, and they were to be heard by one of the new masters, quite a young man.

Certainly it would be easy to spin out the lesson so that he should not work them through more than the forty lines, although they knew that they must be ready to go on to fifty or sixty lines if there were time within the hour.

However, notwithstanding all their efforts, the new master got on horribly quick. Now the clock strikes the three-quarters; there is only a quarter of an hour more; but the forty lines are done.

‘Williams,’ said the master, ‘go on.’

Now Williams was generally supposed to be the cock of the form. He was called Slogger Williams, from the force with which he could hit. He was a rough, good-natured fellow, but he kept up his position with a strong hand, especially in the matter of forcing boys not to translate more than the legitimate forty lines. He found his legs very slowly, and then said to the master, ‘I haven’t learnt any more, sir; our lesson is only forty lines.’

‘Is that so?’ said the master, appealing to the top bench. No answer.

‘Who is the head boy of the form?’ said he.

‘Arthur, sir,’ answered three or four boys.

‘Well now, Arthur, what is the length of your regular lesson?’

Arthur hesitated a moment, and then said, 'We call it only forty lines, sir.'

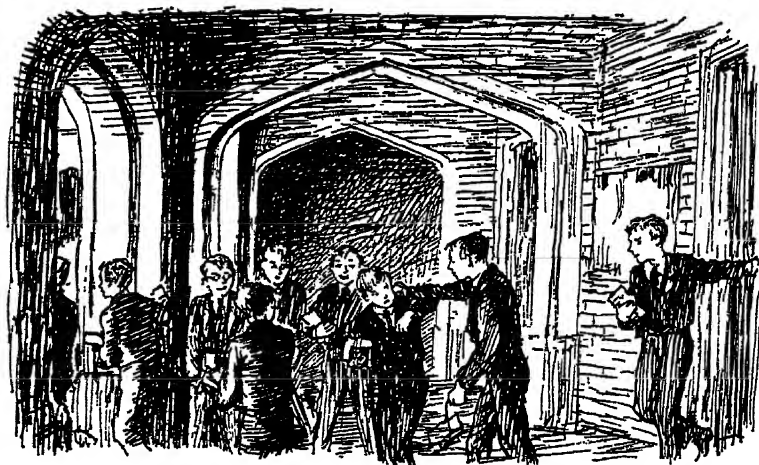
'How do you mean, you call it?'

'Well, sir, Mr. Graham says we ain't to stop there when there's time to translate more.'

'I understand,' said the master. 'Williams, go down three places, and write me out the lesson in Greek and English.' And the clock struck four, which ended the lesson.

Tom was kept in School a few minutes after the rest, and on coming out the first thing he saw was a small ring of boys applauding Williams, who was holding Arthur by the collar.

'There, you young sneak,' said he, giving Arthur a cuff on the head with his other hand, 'what made you say that——'



‘Hullo!’ said Tom, shouldering into the crowd, ‘you drop that, Williams. You shan’t touch him.’

‘Who’ll stop me?’ said the Slogger, raising his hand again.

‘I,’ said Tom; and suiting the action to the word, struck the arm which held Arthur’s collar so sharply that the Slogger dropped it with a start, and turned on Tom.

‘Will you fight?’

‘Yes, of course.’

‘Huzza, there’s going to be a fight between Slogger Williams and Tom Brown.’

The news ran like wild-fire about, and many boys who were on their way to tea turned and sought the back of the chapel, where the fights come off.

‘Just run and tell East to come and back me,’ said Tom to a small School-house boy, who was off like a rocket, just stopping for a moment to poke his head into the School-house Hall, where the lower boys were already at tea, and sing out, ‘Fight! Tom Brown and Slogger Williams.’

Up start half the boys at once, leaving bread, eggs, butter, sprats, and all the rest, to take care of themselves. The others follow in a minute, after swallowing their tea, carrying their food in

their hands to eat as they go. Now East and Martin tear through the quadrangle, carrying a sponge, and arrive at the scene of action just as the combatants are beginning to strip.

Tom felt he had got his work cut out for him, as he stripped off his jacket, waistcoat, and braces. East tied his handkerchief round his waist, and rolled up his shirt-sleeves for him: 'Now, old boy, don't you open your mouth to say a word. You keep all your breath and strength for the Slogger.' Martin folded the clothes and put them under the chapel rails; and now Tom, with East to handle him and Martin to give him a knee, steps out on to the turf, and is ready for all that may come. And here is the Slogger too, all stripped, and thirsting for the fray.

The timekeeper is chosen, a large ring made, and the two stand up opposite one another. Hard all, is the word. Rally follows rally, each fighting as if he thought to finish the whole thing out of hand. 'Can't last at this rate,' say the knowing ones.

'Take it easy, take it easy—keep away, let him come after you,' implores East, as he wipes Tom's face after the first round with wet sponge, while he sits back on Martin's knee.

'Time's up,' calls the timekeeper.



'There he goes again, hang it all!' growls East, as his man is at it again as hard as ever. A very severe round follows, in which Tom gets out-and-out the worst of it. At last he is hit clean off his legs, and laid on the grass by a right-hander from the Slogger. Loud shouts rise from the boys of Slogger's house, and the School-house are silent and vicious, ready to pick quarrels anywhere. Meantime East is freshening up Tom with the sponge for next round.

'Tom, old boy,' whispers he, 'this may be fun for you, but it's death to me. He'll hit all the fight out of you in another five minutes, and then I shall go and drown myself in the island ditch. Use your legs! draw him about! He'll lose his wind then in no time, and you can go into him. Hit at his body.'

Tom felt the wisdom of this advice, and saw already that he couldn't go in and finish the Slogger off at mere hammer and tongs, so he changed his tactics completely in the third round. He now fights cautious, getting away from the Slogger's lunging hits, and leading his enemy a dance all around the ring. 'He's funking; go in, Williams!', 'Catch him up!', 'Finish him off!', scream the small boys of the Slogger party.

‘Just what we want,’ thinks East, chuckling to himself, as he sees Williams blowing himself as he tries to get to close quarters again, while Tom is keeping away with perfect ease. The Slogger pulls up for a moment, fairly blown. ‘Now then, Tom,’ sings out East, dancing with delight. Tom goes in in a twinkling, and hits two heavy body blows, and gets away again before the Slogger can catch his wind. He rushes with blind fury at Tom, over-reaches himself, and falls on his face, amidst terrific cheers from the School-house boys.

After another round the Slogger too seems to see that he can’t go in and win right off. So he begins to use his head, and tries to make Tom lose patience, and come in before his time. And so the fight sways on, now one and now the other getting a trifling pull.

Tom’s face begins to look very one-sided—there are little bumps on his forehead, and his mouth is bleeding. But East keeps the wet sponge going, so that he comes up looking as fresh and bright as ever. Williams is only slightly marked in the face, but you can see that Tom’s body blows are telling. It is too interesting by this time for much shouting, and the whole ring is very quiet.

But where is Arthur all this time? Words cannot paint his distress. The stories he had heard of men being killed in prize-fights rose up horribly before him. Once only, when the shouts of 'Well done, Brown!', 'Huzza for the School-house!' rose higher than ever, he ventured up to the ring, thinking the victory was won. Catching sight of Tom's face in the state I have described, he rushed straight off to the matron's room, beseeching her to get the fight stopped.

But it's time for us to get back to the close. What is this fierce tumult and confusion? The ring is broken, and high and angry words are being bandied about; 'It's all fair!', 'It isn't!', 'No hugging!' The fight is stopped.

The fact is, that, at the end of the last round, Tom had closed with his opponent, and had thrown him heavily, by help of the fall he had learnt from Harry Winburn, in the Vale of the White Horse. Williams hadn't the ghost of a chance with Tom at wrestling, and his party knew that if this were allowed their man must be licked.

Suddenly young Brooke comes through the small gate at the end of the chapel. The School-house boys rush to him. 'Oh, hurra! now we shall get fair play.' 'Please, Brooke, come up;

they won't let Tom Brown throw him.'

'Throw whom?' says Brooke. 'Oh! Williams, I see. Nonsense! Of course he may throw him if he catches him fairly above the waist.'

Now, young Brooke, you're in the sixth, you know, and you ought to stop all fights. He looks hard at both boys; but he can't find it in his heart to stop them just yet, so the fight goes on.



And now another newcomer appears on the field, to wit the under-porter. 'You'd better stop, gentlemen,' he says, 'the Doctor knows

that Brown's fighting—he'll be out in a minute.'

'You go to Bath, Bill,' is all that he gets for his advice. And, being a strong supporter of the School-house, he can't help stopping to look on for a bit, and see Tom Brown fight a round.

It is grim earnest now, and no mistake. Tom works slowly round for an opening, and the Slogger waits for the attack. Tom darts in, the heavy right-hand is delivered, but only grazes his head. A short rally at close quarters, and they close. In another moment the Slogger is thrown again.

Just at this stage of the proceedings the door of the turret which leads to the Doctor's library suddenly opens, and he steps into the close, and makes straight for the ring, in which Brown and the Slogger are both seated on their seconds' knees for the last time.

'The Doctor! the Doctor!' shouts some small boy who catches sight of him, and the ring melts away in a few seconds. Tom collars his jacket and waistcoat, and slips through the little gate by the chapel with his backers. Williams and his friends make off across the close. Young Brooke alone remains on the ground by the time the Doctor gets there, and touches his hat.

'Ha! Brooke. I am surprised to see you here.



Don't you know that I expect the sixth to stop fighting?'

Brooke felt uncomfortable, but he was rather a favourite with the Doctor for his plainness of speech, so he blurted out, as he walked by the Doctor's side—

'Yes, sir, generally. But I thought you wished us not to interfere too soon.'

'But they have been fighting this half-hour and more,' said the Doctor.

'Yes, sir; but neither was hurt. And they'll be all the better friends now, which they wouldn't

have been if they had been stopped any earlier.'

'Well, Brooke,' said the Doctor, 'this fight is not to go on—you'll see to that. And I expect you to stop all fights in future at once.'

'Very well, sir,' said young Brooke, touching his hat, and not sorry to see the turret-door close behind the Doctor's back.

Directly after locking-up, one of the fags knocked at Tom's door.

'Brown, young Brooke wants you in the sixth-form room.'

Up went Tom to the summons, and found the magnates sitting at their supper.

'Well, Brown,' said young Brooke, nodding to him, 'how do you feel?'

'Oh, very well, thank you, only I've sprained my thumb, I think.'

'Sure to do that in a fight. Well, you must shake hands to-morrow morning. I shall come and see it done after first lesson.'

And so he did. And Tom and the Slogger shook hands with great satisfaction. And for the next year or two, whenever fights were being talked of, the small boys who had been present shook their heads wisely, saying, 'Ah! but you should just have seen the fight between Slogger Williams and Tom Brown!'

Fever in the school

Two years have passed since the events recorded in the last chapter, and the end of the summer half-year is again drawing on. Martin has left and gone on a cruise in the South Pacific, in one of his uncle's ships. Arthur is nearly sixteen, and at the top of the School, having gone up at the rate of a form a half-year. East and Tom have been slower in their progress, and are only a little way up the fifth form.

One evening, as they were all sitting down to supper, someone started a report that a fever had broken out at one of the boarding-houses. 'They say,' he added, 'that Thompson is very ill, and that Dr. Robertson has been sent for from Northampton.'

'Then we shall all be sent home,' cried another. 'Hurra! five weeks extra holidays, and no fifth-form examination!'

Some thought one thing, some another, many didn't believe the report. But the next day,

Tuesday, Dr. Robertson arrived and stayed all day, and had long talks with the Doctor.

On Wednesday morning, after prayers, the Doctor addressed the whole School. There were several cases of fever in different houses, he said, but Dr. Robertson had assured him that there was no reason for stopping the School work at present. However, any boys who chose to do so were at liberty to write home, and, if their parents wished it, to leave at once. He should send the whole School home if the fever spread.

The next day Arthur sickened, but there was no other case. Before the end of the week thirty or forty boys had gone, but the rest stayed on. There was a general wish to please the Doctor, and a feeling that it was cowardly to run away.

On the Saturday Thompson died, in the bright afternoon, while the cricket-match was going on as usual on the Big-side ground. The Doctor, coming from his death-bed, passed along the gravel-walk at the side of the close, but no one knew what had happened till the next day.

The week passed mournfully away. No more boys sickened, but Arthur was reported worse each day, and his mother arrived early in the

week. Tom made many appeals to be allowed to see him, and several times tried to get up to the sick-room. But the housekeeper was always in the way, and at last spoke to the Doctor, who kindly, but firmly, forbade him.

The crisis came on Saturday, and during that long afternoon Tom sat in his study reading his Bible, and going every half-hour to the housekeeper's room, expecting each time to hear that his friend was dead. But God had work for Arthur to do. The crisis passed—on Sunday evening he was declared out of danger; on Monday he sent a message to Tom that he was almost well, and was to be allowed to see him next day.

It was evening when the housekeeper summoned him to the sick-room. Arthur was lying on the sofa by the open window, through which the rays of the western sun stole gently, lighting up his white face and golden hair. Tom shuddered to think how near the other world his friend had been. He stole across the room, and knelt down, and put his arm round Arthur's head on the pillow.

Arthur laid his thin white hand on Tom's great brown fist, and smiled at him. Then he looked out of the window, as if he couldn't bear to lose a moment of the sunshine. The elms



rustled, the sparrows chirped and fluttered about, and the merry shouts of the boys, and the sweet click of the cricket-bats, came up cheerily from below.

‘Dear George,’ said Tom, ‘I am so glad to be let up to see you at last. I’ve tried hard to come so often, but they wouldn’t let me before.’

‘Oh, I know, Tom. Mary has told me every day about you, and how she was obliged to make the Doctor speak to you to keep you away. I’m very glad you didn’t get up, for you might have caught it, and you couldn’t stand being ill with all the matches going on. And you’re in the eleven too, I hear—I’m so glad.’

‘Yes, ain’t it jolly?’ said Tom proudly. ‘I made forty at the last match, and caught three fellows out. But I don’t care about cricket or anything now you’re getting well. You’ll get about soon, won’t you? All your things are just as you left them.’

The locking-up bell began to toll, and the two boys were silent and listened to it. The sound soon carried Tom off to the river and the woods, and he began to go over in his mind the many times he had heard that toll coming faintly down the breeze, and had to pack his rod in a hurry and make a run for it, to get in

before the gates were shut. He was roused with a start from his memories by Arthur's voice.

'Tom, will you be angry if I talk to you very seriously?'

'No, dear old boy, not I. But ain't you faint, Arthur, or ill? Don't say anything to hurt yourself now. Let me come up again.'

'No, no, I shan't hurt myself. I'd sooner speak to you now, if you don't mind. I ain't going to pitch into you, but I want you to give up using cribs.'

Arthur sank back on his pillow with a sigh, as if the effort had been great; but the worst was now over, and he looked straight at Tom, who was evidently taken aback. Not a shade crossed his face, but he was clearly puzzled. At last he took Arthur's hand, and said simply—

'Why, young 'un?'

'Because you're the honestest boy in Rugby, and that ain't honest.'

'I don't see that.'

'Well, what were you sent to Rugby for? What do you want to do here?'

Tom thought a minute. 'I want to be At at cricket and all other games. I want to get into the sixth before I leave, and to please the Doctor; and I want to learn just as much Latin

and Greek as will take me through Oxford. That's pretty much about my figure. Ain't it all on the square? What have you got to say to that?'

'You say, Tom, you want to please the Doctor. Does he think you use cribs?'

'You young villain,' said Tom, shaking his fist at Arthur. 'I never think about it. Hang it—there, perhaps he don't. But how on earth am I to get time to play matches if I give up cribs? Mayn't I go on as usual for this half? I'll tell the Doctor about it some day.'

Arthur saw that he had got his point, and there was a long pause. In another minute nine o'clock struck. The door opened, and a lady came in carrying a candle. She went straight to the sofa and took hold of Arthur's hand, and then stooped and kissed him.

'My dearest boy, you've talked too much and excited yourself in the dark. Why didn't you have lights?'

'Oh, no, Mother, you can't think how well I feel. I shall start with you to-morrow for Devonshire. But, Mother, here's my friend, Tom Brown.'

She held out her hand to Tom, who was now standing up behind the sofa. This was Arthur's



mother. She was tall and fair, with masses of golden hair and calm blue eyes. Tom thought he had never seen anything so beautiful. The bell rang for bed before they had well begun their talk, and Tom rose with a sigh to go. 'Shall I see you in the morning?' said he, as he shook his friend's hand. 'Never mind, though, you'll be back next half.'

The next morning, after breakfast, Tom, East, and their friend Gower met as usual to learn their second lesson together. Tom had been considering how to tell the others about giving up the crib, and was saying 'how much it would grieve him after having learnt his lessons with them for so many years, and he

hoped they should still be good friends—but—'

Here the other boys, who had been listening with open eyes and ears, burst in—

'Stuff and nonsense!' cried Gower. 'Here, East, get down the crib and find the place.'

'Oh, Tommy, Tommy!' said East, proceeding to do as he was bidden, 'that it should ever have come to this. I knew Arthur'd be the ruin of you some day, and you of me. And now the time's come'—and he made a doleful face.

'I don't know about ruin,' answered Tom; 'I know that you and I would have had the sack long ago, if it hadn't been for him. And you know it as well as I.'

'Well, we were in a baddish way before he came, I own, but this new fad of his is past a joke.'

'Let's give it a trial, Harry. You know how often he has been right, and we wrong.'

'Now you two,' struck in Gower, 'we've no time to lose. I've got the fives-court at half-past nine.'

'I say, Tom,' cried East, having hit on a new idea, 'don't you remember when old Momus caught me using a crib in class he sent me up to be flogged for it?'

'Yes, I remember it very well.'

'Well, the Doctor, after he'd flogged me, told me that he didn't flog me for using a translation, but for taking it into lesson, and using it there when I hadn't learnt a word before I came in. He said there was no harm in using a crib to get a clue to the hard bits, if you'd tried all you could to understand them without.'

'Did he though?' said Tom. 'Then Arthur must be wrong.'

'Of course he is,' said Gower. 'We'll only use the crib when we can't manage without it. Go ahead East.'

And on this agreement they started. The boys went on as usual, each taking a sentence in turn, and the crib being handed to the one whose turn it was to translate. Of course Tom couldn't object to this, but it must be owned that Gower and East did not try very hard before turning to the crib for help. And so the lesson went on about as quickly as usual, and Gower was able to start for the fives-court within five minutes of the half-hour.

When Tom and East were left face to face, they looked at one another for a minute, and then burst into a roar of laughter.

'Well, Tom,' said East, recovering himself, 'I don't see any objection to the new way. It's

about as good as the old one, I think.'

Tom shoved his hand into his back hair. 'I ain't so sure,' said he. 'You two fellows carried me off my legs. I don't think we really tried one sentence fairly. Are you sure you remember what the Doctor said to you?'

'Yes. And I'll swear I couldn't make out one of my sentences to-day. No, nor never could. I am sure Providence intended cribs to be used.'

'I wish you wouldn't joke about it, Harry. It's a precious sight harder than I thought last night.'

'I say,' said East, looking at his watch, 'it's just the quarter. Come along.'

As they walked out they got a message to say that Arthur was just starting and would like to say good-bye; so they went down to the private entrance of the School-house, and found an open carriage, with Arthur propped up with pillows in it, looking already better. They jumped up on to the steps to shake hands with him. East looked quaintly at Arthur, and said—

'So you've been at it again. Tom's been making our lives a burden all the morning about using cribs. I shall get floored to a certainty at second lesson.'

Arthur blushed and looked down. Tom struck in—

‘Oh, it’s all right. He’s converted already. He always comes through the mud after us, grumbling and sputtering.’

The clock struck and they had to go off to School, wishing Arthur a pleasant holiday. Tom renewed the discussion after second lesson, and succeeded so far as to get East to promise to give the new plan a fair trial.

And so their talk finished, and they tried to learn the next lesson; with very poor success, for they narrowly escaped being floored. But this ill-luck did not sit heavily on either of their souls.



Tom Brown's last match

THE curtain now rises upon the last act of our little drama. Another two years have passed and it is again the end of the summer half-year at Rugby, in fact the School has broken up. The boys have gone to all the winds of heaven, except the town boys and the eleven, and those who have asked leave to stay in their houses to see the result of the cricket-matches. For this year the Wellesburn match and the Marylebone match are played at Rugby, to the sorrow of those young cricketers who had been hoping to show off at Lord's ground.

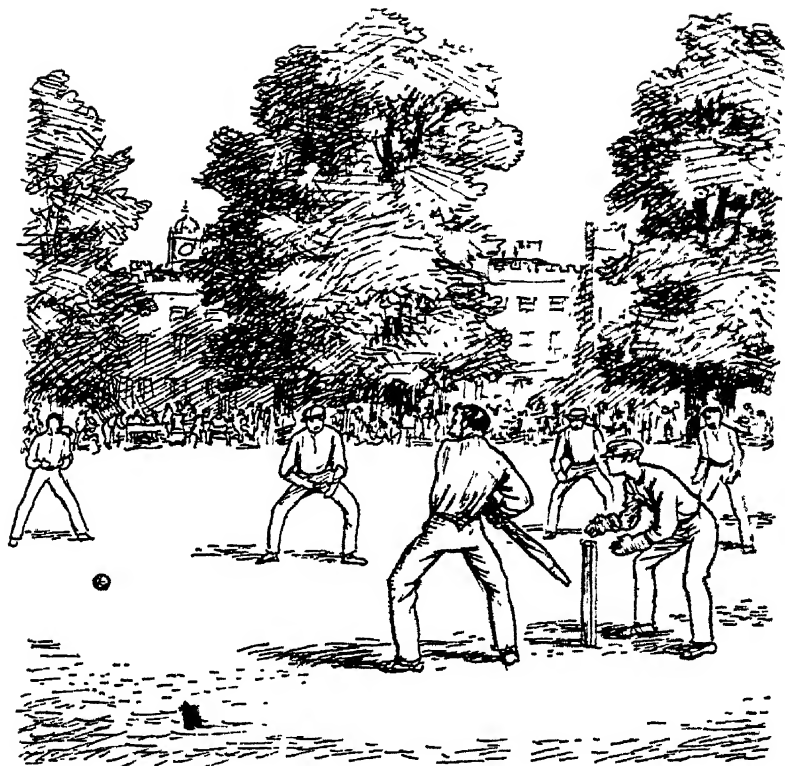
The Wellesburn match was played with great success yesterday, the School winning by three wickets; and to-day the great event of the cricketing year, the Marylebone match, is being played. The London eleven came down by an afternoon train yesterday, in time to see the end of the Wellesburn match; and as soon as it was over, their leading men and umpire inspected

the ground, criticising it rather unmercifully. The captain of the School eleven, and one or two others, who had played the Lord's match before and knew old Mr. Aislebie and several of the Lord's men, accompanied them. The ground was at last chosen, and two men set to work upon it to water and roll; and then, there being yet some half-hour of daylight, someone had suggested a dance on the turf.

In five minutes a merry country dance was going on, to which every one flocked. New couples joined in, till there were a hundred of them going down the middle and up again—the long line of School buildings looked gravely down on them, every window glowing with the last rays of the western sun. At nine o'clock the crowd scattered away from the close, and the eleven went into the School-house, where supper and beds were provided for them by the Doctor's orders.

The morning dawned bright and warm. The ground was in splendid order, and soon after ten o'clock all was ready, and two of the Lord's men took their places at the wicket. Old Bailey called play, and the match has begun.

'Oh, well bowled! well bowled!' cries the



captain, catching up the ball and sending it high above the trees, while the third Marylebone man walks away from the wicket. Old Bailey sets up the middle stump again.

‘How many runs?’ Away scamper three boys to the scoring-table. ‘Only eighteen runs, and three wickets down!’ ‘Huzza for old Rugby!’ sings out Jack Raggles, the long-stop, commonly called ‘Swiper Jack’; and promptly stands on

his head, and waves his legs in the air in triumph, till the next boy catches hold of his heels and throws him over on to his back.

'Steady there. Don't be such an ass, Jack,' says the captain, 'we haven't got the best wicket yet. Ah, look out now at cover-point,' adds he, as he sees a long-armed, bare-headed, slashing-looking player coming to the wicket. 'He steals more runs than any man in England.'

And they all find that they have got their work to do now. The newcomer's off-hitting is tremendous, and his running like a flash of lightning. He has stolen three byes in the first ten minutes. The score creeps up to fifty. The boys begin to look blank, and the spectators are very silent. The ball flies off his bat to all parts of the field, and he gives no rest and no catches to any one.

Johnson, the young bowler, is getting wild, and bowls a ball almost wide to the off. The batter steps out and cuts it beautifully to where cover-point is standing very deep, in fact almost off the ground. The ball comes skimming and twisting along about three feet from the ground. He rushes at it, and it sticks somehow or other in the fingers of his left hand, to the utter astonishment of himself and the whole field. Such a

catch hasn't been made in the close for years, and the cheering is maddening.

I wish I had space to describe the whole match: how the captain stumped the next man off a leg-shooter, and bowled slow lobs to old Mr. Aislebie, who came in for the last wicket. How the Lord's men were out by half-past twelve o'clock for ninety-eight runs. How the captain of the School eleven went in first, and scored twenty-five in beautiful style. How Rugby was only four behind in the first innings.

But I haven't space, that's the fact, and so you must fancy it all, and carry yourselves on to half-past seven o'clock, when the School are again in, with five wickets down, and only thirty-two runs to make to win. The Marylebone men played carelessly in their second innings, but they are working like horses now to save the match.

On the slope which looks towards the cricket-ground is a group to which I beg to call your special attention. It consists of three figures; two are seated on a bench, and one on the ground at their feet. The first, a tall, slight man with a bushy eyebrow and a dry smile, is a young master. And by his side, in white flannel shirt and trousers, straw hat, and captain's belt



sits a strapping figure near six feet high, with ruddy tanned face and whiskers, curly brown hair, and a laughing, dancing eye.

He is leaning forward with his elbows resting on his knees, and dangling his favourite bat, with which he has made thirty or forty runs to-day, in his strong brown hands. It is Tom Brown, grown into a young man nineteen years old, a praeposter and captain of the eleven, spending his last day as a Rugby boy, and let us hope as much wiser as he is bigger since we last had the pleasure of coming across him.

And at their feet on the warm dry ground, similarly dressed, sits Arthur, with his bat across his knees. He too is no longer a boy, and all his old timidity has disappeared. All three are watching the game eagerly, and joining in the cheering which follows every good hit.

'Oh! well played—bravo, Johnson!' shouts Arthur, dropping his bat and clapping furiously.

'Eh? What was it? I didn't see,' inquired the master; 'they only got one run, I thought?'

'No, but such a ball, three-quarters length and coming straight for his leg bail. Nothing but that turn of the wrist could have saved him, and he drew it away to leg for a safe one. Bravo, Johnson!'

'How well they are bowling though,' said Arthur; 'they don't mean to be beat, I can see.'

'Out! Bailey has given him out—do you see, Tom?' cries Arthur. 'How foolish of them to run so hard.'

'Well, it can't be helped. He has played very well. Whose turn is it to go in?'

'I don't know. They've got your list in the tent.'

'Let's go and see,' said Tom, rising; but at this moment Jack Raggles and two or three more come running up.

'Oh, Brown, mayn't I go in next?' shouts the Swiper.

'Whose name is next on the list?' says the captain.

'Winter's, and then Arthur's,' answers the boy who carries it; 'but there are only twenty-four runs to get, and no time to lose. I heard Mr. Aislebie say that the stumps must be drawn at a quarter-past eight exactly.'

'Oh, do let the Swiper go in,' chorus the boys; so Tom agrees against his better judgment.

'I dare say now I've lost the match by this nonsense,' he says as he sits down again. 'They'll be sure to get Jack's wicket in three or four minutes; but you'll have a chance, sir, of seeing

a hard hit or two,' adds he, smiling and turning to the master.

They began to talk about Tom's approaching departure, over which he began to make his moan.

'Well, we shall all miss you quite as much as you will miss us,' said the master. 'You are the leader of the School now, are you not?'

'Yes, ever since East left,' answered Tom.

'By the bye, have you heard from him?'

'Yes, I had a letter in February, just before he started for India to join his regiment.'

'He will make a good officer.'

'Aye, won't he!' said Tom, brightening; 'no fellow could handle boys better, and I suppose soldiers are very like boys. And he'll never tell them to go where he won't go himself. No mistake about that—a braver fellow never walked.'

Meantime Jack Raggles, with his sleeves tucked up above his great brown elbows, scorning pads and gloves, has come to the wicket, and is about to receive his first ball. There are only twenty-four runs to make, and four wickets to go down, a winning match if they play steady.

The ball is a very swift one, and rises fast, catching Jack on the outside of the thigh, and bounding away as if from india-rubber. They

run two for a leg-bye, amidst shouts from Jack's many admirers. The next ball is a beautifully pitched ball for the outer stump. Jack hits it right round to leg for five, while the applause becomes deafening. Only seventeen runs to get with four wickets—the game is all but ours!

It is over now, and Jack walks swaggeringly about his wicket, with the bat over his shoulder, while Mr. Aislebie holds a short parley with his men. Then the cover-point hitter, that cunning man, goes on to bowl slow twisters. Jack waves his hand triumphantly towards the tent, as much as to say, 'See if I don't finish it all off now in three hits.'

Alas, my son Jack! the enemy is too old for thee. The first ball of the over Jack steps out and meets, swiping with all his force. If he had only allowed for the twist! but he hasn't, and so the ball goes spinning up straight into the air, as if it would never come down again. Away runs Jack, but the bowler runs steadily under it, and calling out 'I have it,' catches it, and playfully pitches it on to the back of the stalwart Jack, who is sadly departing.

'I knew how it would be,' says Tom, rising. 'Come along, the game's getting very serious.'

So they go to the tent, and after deep con-

sultation Arthur is sent in. The clock strikes eight, and the whole field is greatly excited. Arthur, after two narrow escapes, scores one; and Johnson gets the ball. The bowling and fielding are superb, and Johnson's batting worthy the occasion. He makes here a two and there a one, managing to keep the ball to himself, and Arthur backs up and runs perfectly. Only eleven runs to make now, and the crowd scarcely breathe.

At last Arthur gets the ball again, and actually drives it forward for two, and feels prouder than when he got the three best prizes, at hearing Tom's shout of joy, 'Well played, well played!'

But the next ball is too much for him, and his bails fly different ways. Nine runs to make, and two wickets to go down—it is too much for human nerves.

Before Winter can get in, the omnibus which is to take the Lord's men to the train pulls up at the side of the close. Mr. Aislebie and Tom consult, and give out that the stumps will be drawn after the next over. And so ends the great match. Winter and Johnson carry out their bats, and, it being a one day's match, the Lord's men are declared the winners, they having scored the most in the first innings.

But such a defeat is a victory: so think Tom and all the School eleven as they accompany their conquerors to the omnibus, and send them off with ringing cheers. Mr. Aislebie has shaken hands all round, saying to Tom, 'I must compliment you, sir, on your eleven, and I hope we shall have you for a member if you come up to town.'

As Tom and the rest of the eleven were turning back into the close, the young master stopped him, and asked him to come up to tea, adding, 'I won't keep you more than half an hour, and ask Arthur to come up too.' So Tom went off to get his boots and things from the tent, and to tell Arthur of the invitation. He promised to follow, so Tom walked quietly away to the gate where the master was waiting, and the two took their way together up the Hillmorton road.

They found the master's house locked up, and all the servants away in the close. They poked about round the house, and Tom mounted a wall from which he could reach a passage window. The window, as it turned out, was not bolted, so in another minute Tom was in the house and down at the front door, which he opened from inside.

Then the two set about foraging for tea. In the cook's private cupboard Tom found a newly baked cake, all rich and flaky, and as a warning to her they finished it to the last crumb. The kettle sang away merrily on the hob, and they settled themselves down in the twilight to the serious drinking of tea.

After some talk on the match, and other subjects, Tom said, 'I wonder where Arthur can be? Why, it's nearly half-past nine already.'

'Oh, he is comfortably at supper with the eleven, forgetful of his oldest friends,' said the master. 'Nothing has given me greater pleasure,' he went on, 'than your friendship for him. It has been the making of you both.'

'Of me, at any rate,' answered Tom. 'I should never have been here now but for him. It was the luckiest chance in the world that sent him to Rugby, and made him my chum.'

'Why do you talk of lucky chances?' said the master. 'I don't know that there are any such things in the world.'

Tom looked at him inquiringly, and he went on. 'Do you remember when the Doctor lectured you and East at the end of one half-year, when you had been getting into all sorts of scrapes?'

'Yes, well enough,' said Tom. 'It was the half-year before Arthur came.'

'Exactly so,' answered the master. 'Now I was with him a few minutes afterwards, and he was in great distress about you two. And, after some talk, we both agreed that you in particular wanted some object in the School beyond games and mischief, for it was quite clear that you never would make work your first object.'

'And so the Doctor, at the beginning of the next half-year, looked out the best of the new boys, and put him into your study, in the hope that when you had somebody to lean on you, you would begin to stand a little steadier yourself. And I can assure you, he has watched the experiment ever since with great satisfaction.'

Up to this time Tom had never wholly understood the Doctor. At first he had thoroughly feared him. For some years he had learnt to regard him with love and respect, and to think him a very great and wise and good man. But it was a new light to him to find that besides governing and guiding the whole School, the great Head-master had found time to watch over Tom Brown and his friends. And so he marched down to the School-house worshipping his hero.

He found the eleven at high jinks after supper. He was soon as great a boy as all the rest, and at ten o'clock was chaired round the quadrangle by the eleven, shouting in chorus, 'For he's a jolly good fellow,' while old Thomas and the School-house servants stood looking on.

And the next morning after breakfast he squared up all the cricketing accounts, went round to his friends and said his hearty good-byes; and by twelve o'clock was in the train, and away for London, no longer a schoolboy.



Finis

IN the summer of 1842, our hero stopped once again at the well-known station; and, leaving his bag and fishing-rod with a porter, walked slowly and sadly up towards the town.

It was now July. He had rushed away from Oxford the moment that term was over, for a fishing ramble in Scotland with two college friends, and had been for three weeks living on oatcake and mutton-hams in the wildest parts of Skye. They had descended one evening on a little inn, and while Tom and another of the party began exploring the stream for a sea-trout for supper, the third strolled into the house to arrange their entertainment.

Presently he came out in a loose blouse and slippers, a short pipe in his mouth, and an old newspaper in his hand, and threw himself on the scrub within easy hail of the fishermen. There he lay, reading the fortnight-old paper which he had hunted out from the kitchen of

the little inn, and calling out the contents to the fishermen.

‘What a bother they are making about these wretched corn laws; here’s three or four columns full of nothing else.—Hang this tobacco, it’s always going out!—Ah, here’s something better—a splendid match between Kent and England, Brown! Kent winning by three wickets. Felix fifty-six runs, and not out!’

Tom, intent on a fish which had risen at him twice, answered only with a grunt.

‘Hullo! here’s something for you,’ called out the reading man next moment. ‘Why, your old master, Arnold of Rugby, is dead.’

Tom’s hand stopped half-way in his cast, and his line and flies went all tangling round and round his rod. You might have knocked him over with a feather. Neither of his companions took any notice of him, luckily; and with a violent effort he set to work to disentangle his line. It was the first great wrench of his life, the first gap which the angel Death had made in his circle, and he felt numbed, and beaten down.

As he wearily laboured at his line, the thought struck him, ‘It may be all false, a mere newspaper lie,’ and he strode up to the smoker.

‘Let me look at the paper,’ said he.

'Nothing else in it,' answered the other, handing it up to him.—'Hullo, Brown! what's the matter, old fellow—ain't you well?'

'Where is it?' said Tom, turning over the leaves, his hands trembling, and his eyes swimming, so that he could not read.

'What? What are you looking for?' said his friend, jumping up and looking over his shoulder.

'That—about Arnold,' said Tom.

'Oh, here,' said the other, putting his finger on the paragraph. Tom read it over and over again; there could be no mistake, though the account was short enough.

'Thank you,' said he at last, dropping the paper. 'I shall go for a walk. Don't wait supper for me.' And away he strode, up over the moor at the back of the house, to be alone, and master his grief if possible.

His friend looked after him, sympathising and wondering, and knocking the ashes out of his pipe, walked over to the third man. After a short parley they walked up to the house.

'I'm afraid that confounded newspaper has spoiled Brown's fun for this trip.'

'How odd that he should be so fond of his old master.'



They waited supper for him, and had everything ready when he came back some half an hour afterwards. But he could not join in their cheerful talk, and the party was soon silent. One thing only had Tom resolved, and that was that he couldn't stay in Scotland any longer. He felt a longing to get to Rugby, and then home, and soon broke it to the others, who had too much tact to oppose.

So by daylight the next morning he was marching through Ross-shire, and in the evening hit the Caledonian Canal, took the next steamer, and travelled as fast as boat and railway could carry him to the Rugby station.

As he walked up to the town he felt shy and afraid of being seen, and took the back streets; why, he didn't know. At the School-gates he made a dead pause; there was not a soul in the quadrangle—all was lonely, and silent, and sad. So with another effort he strode through the quadrangle, and into the School-house offices.

He found the little matron in her room in deep mourning; shook her hand, tried to talk, and moved nervously about: she was evidently thinking of the same subject as he, but he couldn't begin talking.

'Where shall I find Thomas?' said he at last.

'In the servants' hall, I think, sir. But won't you take anything?' said the matron, looking rather disappointed.

'No, thank you,' said he, and strode off again to find the old verger, who was sitting in his little den as of old.

He looked up through his spectacles, as Tom seized his hand and wrung it.

'Ah! you've heard all about it, sir, I see,' said he.

Tom nodded, and then sat down, while the old man told his tale, and wiped his spectacles, and fairly flowed over with homely, honest sorrow.

By the time he had done Tom felt much better.

'Where is he buried, Thomas?' said he at last.

'Under the altar in the chapel, sir,' answered Thomas. 'You'd like to have the key, I dare say.'

'Thank you, Thomas. Yes, I should very much.' And the old man fumbled among his bunch, and then got up, as though he would go with him; but after a few steps stopped short, and said, 'Perhaps you'd like to go by yourself, sir?'



Tom nodded, and the bunch of keys was handed to him, with a request to be sure to lock the door after him, and bring them back before eight o'clock.

He walked quickly through the quadrangle and out into the close. The longing which had been upon him and driven him thus far seemed all of a sudden to shrivel up. 'Why should I go on? It's no use,' he thought, and threw himself at full length on the turf, and looked vaguely and listlessly at all the well-known objects.

There were a few of the town boys playing cricket, their wicket pitched on the best piece in the middle of the Big-side ground. He was very nearly getting up to go and send them off. 'Pshaw! they won't remember me. They've more right there than I,' he muttered. He was lying on the very spot where the fights came off; where he himself had fought his first and last battle. He conjured up the scene till he could almost hear the shouts of the ring, and East's whisper in his ear; and looking across the close to the Doctor's private door, he half expected to see it open, and the tall figure in cap and gown come striding under the elm-trees towards him.

No, no! that sight could never be seen again. There was no flag flying on the round tower;

the School-house windows were all shuttered up. When the flag went up again, and the shutters came down, it would be to welcome a stranger. All that was left on earth of him whom he had honoured was lying cold and still under the chapel floor. He would go in and see the place once more, and then leave it once for all. And so he got up, and walked to the chapel-door and unlocked it.

He passed through the vestibule, and then paused for a moment to glance over the empty benches. His heart was still proud and high, and he walked up to the seat which he had last occupied as a sixth-form boy, and set himself down there to collect his thoughts.

The memories of eight years were all dancing through his brain, while beneath them all his heart



was throbbing with the dull sense of a loss that could never be made up to him. The rays of the evening sun came through the painted windows above his head, and fell in gorgeous colours on the opposite wall. And then he turned to the pulpit, and looked at it, and then, leaning forward with his head on his hands, groaned aloud. If he could only have seen the Doctor again for five minutes, to have told him all that was in his heart, what he owed him, and how he loved him. But that he should have gone away for ever without knowing it all, was too much to bear.

He raised himself up and looked round; and after a minute rose and walked humbly down to the lowest bench, and sat down on the very seat which he had occupied on his first Sunday at Rugby. And then the old memories rushed back. There came the thought of all his old schoolfellows. Could he not think of them, and what they were feeling—they who had honoured and loved from the first the man whom he had taken years to know and love?

He rose up once more, and walked up the steps to the altar; and while the tears flowed freely down his cheeks, knelt down humbly, to lay there his share of a burden which was too

heavy for him to bear in his own strength.

Here let us leave him—where better could we leave him than at the grave of him who had opened his eyes to the glory of his birth-right, and softened his heart till it could feel the bond which links all living souls together in one brotherhood ?



